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RUDOLF BULTMANN AND DIALECTICAL THEOLOGY:
A TRANSLATION AND DISCUSSION
OF
THREE RELEVANT ESSAYS

by

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A THESIS

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PREFACE

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PART I: THE INTRODUCTION

In 1962 Jürgen Moltmann published under the title Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie¹ a two part (volume) work of heretofore unpublished or previously published but now obscure shorter essays of such well-known theologians as Friedrich Gogarten, Emil Brunner, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. This compilation is of special interest because it makes accessible again to the contemporary student and followers of Barth and Bultmann, particularly, the early thoughts of these men which otherwise would never be available, albeit that these two volumes are themselves entirely in German. In the advanced stages of this present study, James D. Smart's brief, but sincere endeavor² to provide English-speaking students of Bultmann and Barth with a summary of the outstanding arguments from relevant material reproduced basi-

¹in: Theologische Bücherei. Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert. Bd 17 Systematische Theologie. Munich: Christian Kaiser 1962. (All subsequent references to this work will appear as "Moltmann, part (i. e., volume), and page.")

²The Divided Mind of Modern Theology. Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, 1908 - 1933. Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1967. (A reading of this work has revealed some similarity of thought between the thinking of Smart and this endeavor. However, this is due more to the fact that common to both are the essays translated here, than to direct dependence. Where this work is directly dependent on Smart's thinking however, proper acknowledgement is given.)

cally in Anfänge appeared. Smart does a laudable study in understanding the temperament of the theological argument of the two theologians of that period, without imposing a prejudiced value judgment on the work of either. Neither does he extenuate the difference between them, nor attempt to effect a comradeship beyond that which is actually evident.

This present study, in effect then, proceeds from the same interests, as do both the studies of Moltmann and Smart, namely, from historical interests. It maintains that many of the misunderstandings emerge from the unavailability in English of the earlier essays of Barth and Bultmann, but particularly in the case of the latter, and that they could have been and may still be avoided, or at least corrected, by studying the theologians in the light of their earlier publications, i. e., by studying them in their formative years. Therefore, this historical interest seeks to provoke a broader appreciation for the theological scholarship of both Barth and Bultmann. However, this present study does not intend to rehearse Smart's publication, but rather it presents an English translation of three essays written by Bultmann, from which a synthesis will be sought which perhaps will illuminate the path taken by him towards an existentialistic theology and existentialism. More-

over, this synthesis and translation will assist, hopefully, in ascertaining if what the essays are all about has been attained in the years which have elapsed since they were written, or if they are only expressions of an episode which occurred in the early twentieth century, never to effect the thought of theology.

A

A succinct statement of this movement would be advantageous.¹ The movement, "dialectical theology," began around the opening of the second decade of the twentieth century and was in patent rebellion to the contemporary theological mood. It has been observed that the decade following World War I is characterized in general by a sense of unrest, insecurity, frustration, crises in culture, nation and Christendom.² Here it is difficult to state with the strong affirmative of Moltmann that dialectical theology arises not out of this crisis situation, but rather judges it; because it may well criticize its time, but it could do so with any degree of accuracy and

¹cf. Smart, op. cit. for a more thorough study.

²Moltmann, I, p. ix.

honesty, only because it was beyond, and not prior to that situation. Hence, dialectical theology may well be said to evolve from within and extend beyond that situation. But this is not the place to argue the question whether dialectical theology was most closely related to the cultural crisis as a critique of the time or as a result of the latter. On the contrary, it is more important to note what was or is being judged, and, since it is judged negatively, what alternative is offered.

From its conception dialectical theology protested most vehemently against four tendencies which best described the mood of late nineteenth century continental thinking. Evident thereof were a strong Protestant culture which considered itself the epitome of Christian development; a neo-confessionalism which sought to legitimize with dogmas its theology; a revived interest in historical exegesis, i. e., an extension of the methodology of form-criticism, which provided this culture with a pyramidal model which placed it at the apex as the best of all possible Christian cultures; and, an up-surge of unusual personal piety which, stemming from that belief, sought to establish the concept that man, through history and culture, was able to grasp, to attain God.¹

¹Moltmann, I, p. ix^f.

"Crisis theology," "theology of the Word of God," or "dialectical theology" rebelled by removing man from the center of theology and restoring God to that position. And to be sure, this restoration assumed the form of a looming, monosyllabic negation; "No". All of man's striving, his self-glorification, indeed, even his self-humiliation under the mis-conceived notion of gaining access thereby to God, are met unequivocally with a No, God's No. Only when man has heard this No and has submitted himself internally to this No, --not that he is able even to do this of his own merits, is he able to hear God's Yes. Moreover, dialectical theology maintains that both this Yes and this No may be heard only in faith, and man does not have access to this faith as an observable, concrete entity; but it is given first and only by God, working through the Holy Spirit. Consequently, any attempt to establish and perpetuate a Christian culture having observable roots is a denial of God and His unique revelation in Jesus Christ.

B

At the helm of this protest stand two young theologians, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, who carry at once the protest against the man who felt himself secured in his traditional

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confessionalism and against the man who would redeem and exalt himself through personal piety.¹

Of the two, Barth must be credited with bringing this struggle to expression, and to be sure, he does this with his commentary on Paul's "Epistle to the Romans," which bears the same title. While a pastor in Safenwil, Switzerland, Barth published two versions of this commentary, the 1919 version which was received so positively by so many of his contemporaries that he felt compelled three years later to reverse his position in a new, 1922 edition. In both instances he felt his true motive to be misunderstood, but only in the latter does he feel that he has finally expressed what was the issue behind Paul's epistle.

Although Barth's commentary itself has been translated into English,² his preface to the German edition of 1922, unfortunately, remains untranslated, with Barth having written a shorter preface for the English edition. Consequently, any appreciation of his thoughts in this preface must be limited either to secondary scholarship or one is forced to

¹Moltmann, I, p. xi.

²trans. by E.D. Hoskyns from the sixth edition, (London: Milford, 1933).

seek out the German preface. The latter provides some interesting insights into the entire historical study of dialectical theology, especially for the early phases, and deserves some treatment here.

In it Barth takes the care to explain his theological position, his theological approach to the problem of exegesis as he perceives and does it. Moreover, as indicated, it is his Epistle to the Romans, 1922 which ignites the theological flame, in order to use a figure of speech. One acquires a sensitivity for what follows in his statement, "Nur Vorarbeit ist alles menschliche Werk und ein theologisches Buch mehr als jedes andre Werk."¹ With this presupposition that all human endeavor is always merely preparation, and above all, theology, Barth sets aside his attitude of his first edition and begins from a new theological point of view. The overwhelming positive expression of 1919 gives way to a 'negating' affirmation. The new, the "dialectical" Barth attributes this 'about-face' to four interdependent factors: 1) a new and true acquaintance with Paul; 2) the influence of Overbeck;² 3) a

¹Karl Barth, Der Römerbrief, (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1929), p. vi.

²Franz Overbeck, d. 1905, professor of New Testament and an-

better knowledge of the thoughts of Plato and Kant through the help of his philosophy oriented brother, Heinrich Barth; and an enlarged understanding of what Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky perceived in the Scriptures through the assistance of his friend, Eduard Thurneysen, in St. Gallen; and, 4) the shock at the warm reception of his first commentary.¹

That the 1922 version was not to be received as favorably as that of 1919 is illustrated firstly by Barth himself as he anticipates his critics. Two outstanding criticisms leveled at him because of his 1919 work and carried over to the 1922 commentary demonstrate precisely what dialectical theology sought to bring to the center of the theological arena.² Barth is accused of making theology, and hence the proclamation of the Word, more complicated, and secondly, of ignoring complete-

cient Church history in Basel, 1870 - 1897. Overbeck, a progenitor of form-criticism, held that all human history, inclusive of ecclesiastical or religious history, stands under the sign of death and judgment. Moreover, he refutes the then held concept of Heilsgeschichte: revelation of God in history. The Church betrayed its calling as early as the post-Apostolic era by losing its intense sense of eschatological consciousness. It was this factor (Urgeschichte) which separated the Church from the doomed history of secular man. (Smarth, op. cit., p. 100f.).

¹Barth, op. cit., p. viif.

²cf. A. Schlatter, "Karl Barth's 'Römerbrief'," in Moltmann, I, p. 142 - 147.

ly the contribution of historical criticism in interpretation of Scripture, in other words, of expositing a revived doctrine of inspiration of Scripture. In response Barth remarks that the simplicity which is sought stands not at the beginning, but at the end of the theological path which is attained only at the consummation with God. Although simplicity and oneness may be the symbol of the divine unity, the situation of man in history and before God is such that man is always before the No of God, that man is not at peace, either with himself, or his neighbor, or God. Barth writes:

Einfach ist für uns weder der Römerbrief des Paulus, noch die heutige Lage in der Theologie, noch die heutige Weltlage, noch die Lage des Menschen Gott gegenüber überhaupt. Wem es in dieser Lage um die Wahrheit zu tun ist, der muss den Mut aufbringen, zunächst einmal auch nicht einfach sein zu können. Schwer und kompliziert ist das Leben der Menschen heute in jeder Beziehung.¹

How extremely contemporary his statement of 1922 resounds!

The second element of concern of dialectical theology, to which he addresses himself, is the proper function of

¹op. cit., p. ix. (Simple for us is neither Paul's "Epistle to the Romans," nor the contemporary situation in theology, nor the present world situation, nor the attitude of man towards God in general. Whoever strives after truth must first dare not to permit himself to be naive. Human existence today is difficult and complicated in every relation.)

historical criticism. Branded an enemy of historical criticism, Barth clarifies his position by pointing out that although he recognizes, and indeed would not consider doing exegesis without first employing this criticism, historicism and historical criticism alone do not attain that which is intended in the text, i. e., historical criticism alone does not elucidate what lies beyond the text. It is at best a 'simple paraphrase and/or translation of Greek words and word-groupings with the aid of philological and archeological methods.' At worst it leads man into the erroneous belief that he may establish the essence of faith and his existence through an objective procedure. Precisely this is what dialectical theology disclaims.

Thus dialectical theology rejects the appellations, "method," or "system," in the sense that either connotes a way by which man is able to elevate himself to the level of God. On the contrary, it points to and grapples with the deception of cultural Protestantism idealistically to harmonize God and mankind, revelation and reason, religion and culture, from a philosophy of identity point of view. Dialectical theology points, instead, to the unbridgeable abyss between God and man, between the sinning man and the redeeming God. Man's

identity is to be sought and found only in relationship to
that divine Yes and No.

II

If Barth approaches the theological rebellion from the point of view of pastor and may seen seen laying the foundation for his preponderous systematic Church Dogmatics, Rudolf Bultmann comes to the debate from the rank of the professional theologians, being already associated with the theological faculty in Marburg. During this period Bultmann may be observed developing his own theological position and exegetical techniques. From the three essays which follow, as well as or in spite of his initially supportive role towards Karl Barth, it is obvious that here it is not a question of the matured, existentialistic interpreter who calls for a thorough demythologization of the Scriptures. Although traces may be discovered in individual sections and paragraphs, a fully developed existentialistic theology is not yet present.

In terms of this development then, if Bultmann's existentialistic-demythologizing position is considered his most mature position, his theological growth may be said to reflect the following pattern. His schooling is within the old, but

liberal history of religion, i. e., form-critical, school which resulted ultimately in that cultural Protestantism, against which he rebelled. The period of rebellion, designated by the above nomenclature 'dialectical theology,' 'theology of crisis,' 'theology of the Word,' indicates the period of conception and growth of his own theological and hermeneutical approach. Finally, there is Bultmann, the existentialistic theologian.

It is evident from the essays in this study that there is another valid way, if not for the neophyte in Bultmann studies a more elementary way, of approaching the work and life of Rudolf Bultmann. That is to say, throughout the entire activity of Bultmann, we are dealing with two men,¹ -- what is not always explicit in his works. There is Rudolf Bultmann the existentialistic theologian and there is the scientific historian. Both personalities are attracted to the same text. The latter approaches the text to discover 'what is said.' The former seeks to discover 'what is intended.' And although each must do his particular task initially alone, ultimately they must coincide, must be mutually assisting.²

¹Smart, op. cit., p. 73.

²cf. below, p. 86, 93.

For ultimately, each is attempting only to explicate man's dialectical relationship with God, and neither can do so alone.

A

When Bultmann reviewed favorably Barth's commentary of 1922, he put himself fully and openly in opposition to most of his contemporaries who taught a religion of culture which made man the center of its theology and God an element in it.¹ This was not only poor theology, but it was, in his opinion, not theology at all. Besides the reasons which drew Barth and Bultmann together, Bultmann's critique is of secondary historical significance, because it does precisely that; it provides evidence of their mutual, although temporary efforts against the trends in theology of that time, although they presently represent two very diverse theological positions. Yet, a close and thorough reading of Bultmann's critique, as well as of the other two essays, will reveal a breach between Barth and Bultmann which was already present in 1922, which is due fundamentally to the theological base, the Stellungnahme of each. This break will be dealt with more closely below, after first discussing the positive aspects of his

¹cf. below, pp. 1, 31, 41, 48.

critique. Here, however, it is important only to keep in mind the fact that the bases of operation are fundamentally pastoral in the one instance and professional or academic in the other,¹ although ultimately Bultmann's concern also is that the Word is proclaimed in the congregation.

Bultmann, who does not compare the Romans of 1922 with that of 1919, is interested not so much in the theology of Barth, as he is in expressing his own view. He is favorably drawn to Barth's commentary because he sees its purpose as an attempt to establish "the independence and absoluteness of religion ... to illustrate ... a religious apriori."² That is to say, faith --and in most instances the word "faith" may be substituted for Bultmann's use of "religion"-- does not stand at man's disposal, to be determined through psychological, historical or phileological methods. All these attempts only bring man to man again and not to God, to faith. "There is no history of faith."³ Faith is not a deepening of an already present inclination. No method can lead to God. Faith "cannot be perceived at all."⁴ Faith is, on the contrary,

¹cf. above, pp. ix and xv.

³cf. below, p. 4.

²cf. below, p. 1.

⁴cf. below, p. 17.

a question "of a 'dialectical' difference between God and the world."¹ Thus Bultmann lauds Barth for the latter's battle against all 'psychologizing, historicizing interpretation of religion, against an experience cult.'² However, Bultmann expresses all this in his own terminology.³

The second strongest positive attraction is Barth's insistence that exegesis requires an inner relation to the matter of the text. Bultmann emphasizes this in his critique of the Romans of 1922, but more particularly, in his essay on a 'theological exegesis.'

A minor point of disagreement, although positively brushed aside, is the role which Barth delegates [^]Jesus Christ. For both theologians, Jesus Christ is a central figure, indeed the central figure. Both agree as to the importance of the cross in redemption. Yet Bultmann accuses Barth of making Jesus into a symbol, rather than allowing him and his cross to confront man in his daily life. Bultmann justifies Barth's attitude on the grounds that the latter's use of 'Jesus is a symbol for the truth' is an attempt to forestall the temptation to make divine revelation a psychical, historical fact.⁴

¹cf. below, p. 5.

³cf. below, p. 18, 21, 24f.

²cf. below, p. 2.

⁴cf. below, p. 40.

Bultmann does not develop a detailed Christology here. Christ is simply designated as the verbum visibile.¹

More serious, however, is Bultmann's criticism that Barth's "Sprung ins Leere," his leap into space, does not agree with the Pauline teaching concerning the confession of faith, i. e., not faith as a psychical process or reflection, rather "faith is the paradoxical fact of the appropriation of justification ... in ... consciousness," and "faith is not without confession."² Here this study will have to disagree with Smart's opinion³ that the chief difference between Barth and Bultmann lies in the discussion under the section "The Way to Faith." Granted that Bultmann emphasizes "the highly individual character of faith as each man's own response to God," he would, however, ultimately agree --and this is the determinative point at issue in the period of dialectical theology-- that faith is indescribable, that all speaking of God is a 'not-speaking' which, however, has to be done.⁴ Bultmann, as does Barth, rejects the belief that faith may be discerned as a psychical, historical event.

¹cf. below, p. 40.

³op. cit., p. 117f.

²cf. below, p. 26.

⁴cf. below, pp. 34, 83, 85, and 126.

B

For all their points of mutual concern, Barth and Bultmann are not one during the period defined by dialectical theology, and if Smart really seeks to underline the main differences between the two, he might take a closer look at Bultmann's essay on "The Problem of dialectical Theology," because in it, the gap becomes more apparent. Bultmann questions the justification of a 'dialectical' theology.¹ Since all speaking about God is, in his opinion, an impossibility --this is a tenet of dialectical theology-- i. e., since no theology may presume to speak in place of God, is not dialectical theology merely another way, and indeed a negative one, for speaking about God and truth? The Good News is the only way to speak of God.² Moreover, the point of disagreement in his critique on Barth's Romans recurs.³ In his discussion of the eternal Logos, Bultmann emphasizes the theological position that this eternal event cannot be pinpointed.⁴ Just as a painter captures the flight of a bird on canvas or a photographer in a photograph, i. e., in its

¹cf. below, p. 5.

³cf. below, p. 38f.

²cf. below, p. 105.

⁴cf. below, p. 102f.

momentariness, and as soon as the picture is completed it has lost the motion of the bird, so does all theological endeavor only temporarily grasp the eternal truth of God. For Bultmann, that man is a sinner estranged from God and that God seeks to redeem the sinner, this truth is a concrete reality to be actualized through the wonder of the Holy Spirit. Revelation, i. e., the content, this truth, is not paradoxical. "The event is paradoxical."¹ "The seriousness of dialectical theology is that it does not equate its declarations with that of the divine declaration."² Yet the weakness of dialectical theology, --and this is where the theological distance between Barth and Bultmann widens, is that dialectical theology, in its denial of permission to man to consider his position in this theology seriously, takes its presupposition too seriously. For if God's truth is to have any significance, it must have it in relation to man. "If God is the object of our human speaking, then we shall have to make clear to ourselves that we have to speak about ourselves, precisely in order not to put forth philosophical dialectics and in order

¹cf. below, p. 119.

²cf. below, p. 107.

not to speculate."¹ "For does not the statement that I am a sinner and that God is gracious to the sinner speak about God as well as it speaks about me?"²

The second major instance of disagreement between the two theologians is brought to expression in Bultmann's discussion with Peterson concerning the authority of Christ in the world and the mediation of his message by the Church in its preaching and teaching.³ For Peterson, the authority of Christ is an eternal, unbroken event, the extension of God into the world, and is an event which does not necessitate constant renewal. Moreover, the Church controls this truth through the creation of dogmas. Peterson, as well as Barth, does not maintain that the event of Christ is an objective event from which a system such as cultural Protestantism arises, for this is the whole issue of dialectical theology; but he only states that Christ does not reappear nor have to reappear in order for salvation to be appropriated. His oneness is sufficient.

Fundamentally, Peterson's attitude reflects Barth's point

¹cf. below, p. 123.

³cf. below, p. 109 and 127f.

²cf. below, p. 124.

of view. Revelation occurred in the years 1 - 30. It is the task of the Church, through its theology, to discern between truth and falsehood. In other words, in its teaching and preaching, the Church must seek constantly to return to the original gospel message.¹ Dialectical theology prevents the Church from establishing a theology of culture. This attitude seems to deny the vivacity of the gospel command for Bultmann. Moreover, since all theology is human speaking, and therefore may not lay claim definitively to eternal truth, the Church may not exercise direct authority through the creation of dogmas. Theology "is a human undertaking which takes place under divine mandate and stands under the promise that God's Spirit intends to make our word a living word which is authority."² That is to say, even as early as 1926 the problem for Bultmann was in assuring that the Word of God should not be, indeed, cannot be made to conform to the speech patterns and limited concepts of a past event, but rather that it should be encountered and interpreted anew in each situation by each individual. This is done in the preaching and hearing of the Word.

¹Smart, op. cit., p. 20f.

²cf. below, p. 128.

Although his essay "The Problem of 'Dialectical' Theology," which is the basis for the above discussion, follows his essay on a "Theological Exegesis of the New Testament" chronologically by one year, it is immediately obvious that the concepts defined in the former are the presuppositions of the latter; and that therefore, it was justified to discuss its impact first. However, the earlier essay exemplifies more clearly Bultmann's stride towards an existentialistic theology and a development of his hermeneutics. Little needs to be said here concerning the role of dialectics in guiding his thinking towards existentialism. This has been discussed above and is more accurately stated in his own words in the essays.

C

Among the three earlier essays translated here, his essay on "The Problem of a Theological Exegesis of the New Testament" demonstrates most clearly the application of his hermeneutical method before the period of his fully developed existentialistic interpretation of Scripture. Dialectical Theology has helped him to follow the pyramidal philosophy of religion, i. e., from rationalism and universal truths to historical exegesis which would comprehend the individual as an example of the total unity (continuity) of history, through

the psychological interpretation of man which would understand him as a product of psychical situations, to a near existentialistic interpretation of man's existence.

Sample existentialistic terminology or precusory conceptions are to be found in his critique of the Romans of 1922 on pages 23f., 25, 26f., 39f.; in "The Problem of a Theological Exegesis of the New Testament" on pages 52f, 60 - 65, 67f., 75, 77f., 81, 85f., 90f., 94; and, in "The Problem of 'Dialectical' Theology" on pages 101, 102, 115f., 120, 121f., 133, 134f. Phrases such as "in the concrete moment of the Here and Now," or "potentiality of existence as a human potentiality," or "the real man when he is seen in the given moment of his temporality" are but a few examples of the emerging existentialistic turn of words to be found in these essays. Others have already been cited in other connections.

The problem of hermeneutics is discussed in "The Problem of a Theological Exegesis of the New Testament." The nature of the appropriation of existentialistic terminology is seen primarily in his discussion of the differences between the many exegetical methods and above all, the attitude of the exegete. Important in the interpretation is the attitude of the exegete towards the matter to be explicated. Ideally,

exegesis should be done from the open, neutral position of the exegete.¹ But this is impossible. The weakness of the so-called scientific historical approach towards exegesis was not that it asked 'what is said,' but that it presumed to proceed one step beyond, namely, to explain from this position 'what is intended,' as if it stood outside of history and could observe it. "The decisive question is whether we stand over against history in such a manner that we recognize its demand on us."² There is no neutral exegesis. Basic to every exegesis is the self-interpretation of the exegete as a man within the realm of that which is humanly possible.³ A speaking about God is of necessity a speaking about man in his existence. Otherwise, it would be speculation. In Sachexegese, the precursory term for 'existential interpretation,' "we are asking about the potentialities for our existence which grow out of our confrontation with history... We must not expect an answer to this question as a presupposition by which the text would be investigated, because then we would have already at our disposal the possibilities of our existence, about which the text is first

¹cf. below, p. 51

³cf. below, p. 61f.

²cf. below, p. 53.

supposed to tell us."¹

The rift becomes more obvious, i. e., both Barth and Bultmann begin to explore more independently their conception of the form and role of the Church's proclamation. Bultmann is grateful to dialectical theology for opening the way for his refutation of "spectator scholarship."² This caused him to demand an honest appraisal of the interpreter's self-interpretation in the process of text interpretation and to combine this attitude with that of a Sachkritik, in which 'what is said' is evaluated by 'what is meant,' that is, by the reality which lies beyond the text itself. Both these latter presuppositions demonstrate the theological existentialistic fledgling and the scientific historian.

Briefly then, in summary it might be recalled that although Bultmann and Barth labor together for a brief time, each approaches this task from two fundamentally different bases in the interpretation of Scripture. Their common interest lies in the repudiation of natural theology and all other aberrant theologies which would reject the uniqueness of the Christ-event --as each interprets that-- and in the rejection

¹cf. below, p. 75.

²The term is borrowed from Smart, op. cit., p. 136.

of that cultural Protestantism because it replaced God with man as the center of its theology. Yet, the main point of their agreement, the significance of the Kerygma, i. e., the preaching of the Word, is ultimately also their chief point of later antagonism. Barth calls man back to the original gospel narratives and intends to harmonize faith with that of the Apostles and Early Church. Bultmann, on the other hand, demands a constant renewal of the proclamation. That is to say, he does not demand a new or better proclamation, but rather an interpretation of the one, true proclamation in the concrete Here and Now.

Then in term of the question, which of the two, in his own theological development, has remained most true to the teachings of Herrmann and the latter's insistence upon an always new and open approach to the interpretation of the Scriptures for each new situation, it is now possible in retrospection to assert that it is Barth, as Bultmann accuses him, who has departed from that original attitude. Barth's determination to bring all preaching into agreement with the thought pattern of the ancient Church, instead of considering the latter only as an expression of what lies behind and beyond that pattern, i. e., what is intended, creates a sense

of dependency which tends to hinder the comprehension of this truth. Bultmann, on the other hand, as he develops his own thinking, remains most true to the teachings of Herrmann. This may be seen from a comparison of the following essays with his subsequent and more fully developed essays on hermeneutics and existentialistic theology. By definition, his theological position requires an openness, and hence, the capacity for a more concrete speculation, --what is seemingly denied in Barth.

In conclusion, a word should be said about the actual process of translation itself. Every theologian who is acquainted with the efforts of German theologians is appreciative of the difficulty of rendering certain German phrases into English, and hence, he is aware and, indeed, prepared for the usual hyphenated word groupings, participial modifiers and the like. This translation is no exception. However, care has been taken to render the following essays into correct English, without destroying the meaning of the German text. When rephrasing is impossible or where the translation of a word or phrase into normal English is dubious or would be remote from the German, the German phrase is enclosed in parentheses immediately following the English. In the case of

Bultmann's quotations from Kierkegaard, translations have been made to conform to standard English translations and this is annotated both in footnotes and in the bibliography. Translations of quotations from Barth's commentary are my own because the difficulty of his German has not permitted the Hoskyns' translation to follow it directly. That is not to imply that it does not capture the meaning of the German, ultimately. However, the English version differed too greatly to allow the cohesiveness of thought, in my opinion, required in Bultmann's critique. Finally, the pagination has been made to agree with the 1929 German printing, as it was the only copy available for comparison in the library.

This introduction does not claim to be the definitive declaration of the entire spectrum of the thoughts of Bultmann or Barth, nor even of the following essays. It hopes at least to provoke an interest in the translations which follow, and at best, to provide a general background for that appreciation.

PART II: THE TRANSLATIONS

(1)

Karl Barth's "Epistle to the Romans" in the Second Edition

1. The Presentation of the Problem.
2. Faith and "Experience".
3. Faith as Wonder.
4. Faith and Consciousness.
5. Faith and Logos.
6. The Way to Faith.
7. Christ.
8. The Relationship to the Text.

1. The Presentation of the Problem

One may best characterize Karl Barth's "Epistle to the Romans" in a sentence, the formulation of which he himself would surely find fault, but which will however stand according to previously employed usages of the language: The book intends to prove the independence and absoluteness of religion. Consequently, it places itself --even when in the original form of a commentary-- in a line with works as Schleiermacher's On Religion* and Otto's Das Heilige, to illustrate with modern attempts a religious apriori, indeed finally with the Epistle to the Romans itself, which with its radical antithesis basically does not intend anything else, -as different as all these attempts may be individually in creating expression in the language for the consciousness of the peculiarity and unconditionality of religion.

It is natural that such an undertaking is always historically determined, insofar as the front being fought

*trans. J. Oman, New York: Harper and Row 1958.

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in it is always given through the psychical situation of its time and basically means a self-analysis of the author. Just as Paul fights for the faith against the law of works, so does Schleiermacher against the "Enlightenment", as does Otto against a rationalizing and ethics-forming interpretation of religion, as it had widely prevailed in the Ritschlian School. And against which front does Barth fight?

Against the psychologizing, historicizing interpretation of religion, which not only plays or has played a role in the historical (so-called liberal) theology, but in theology and contemporary intellectual life in general. He fights against every "Experience" cult (whereby "experience" is understood as a psychic fact or psychic act), against every interpretation which sees in religion an interesting phenomenon of culture, which would understand religion in connection with a psychical-historical life. He fights against other things also, but that struggle gives his book its peculiar character.

Of course Barth does not talk of "religion" in this sense, for this expression serves him precisely only as a designation of a psychical-historical reality. However our dispute would not lie in words, and in the dispute with him, we gladly concede to Barth his own use of the language. Con-

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sequently, the question reads: Wherein does the essence of faith lie?

2. Faith and "Experience"

"It (faith) is nowhere identical with the historical and psychological perspicuity of religious experience."

(p. 102). "Even your impression of revelation, your emotion, your experience, your inspiration is flesh, is of this world."

(p. 49). "Wherever faith is present, the warmth of sensation, the impetus of conviction, the attained level of disposition and morality are always only the accompanying human, and consequently, unimportant signs of the actual event... Precisely for that reason is faith never identical with 'piety',

and even if it were the finest and purest." (p. 15). What-

ever is visible psychically and historically as the priority of one man before one other is only the 'person', the form,

the mask, the role assumed in the play... It has significance

only in itself; it does not mean however a lasting distinc-

tion, one which extends beyond the crisis of everything per-
ishable to the imperishable." (p. 38, cf. p. 83, 84, 221).

Faith is not a "return to unrestricted life," (p. 146), not a
"blessed, happy feeling." (p. 127). The religious urge is,

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for example, separated from the need to sleep only through a difference of degree. (p. 217). The message of faith, consequently, is not fitted for a satiation of so-called religious needs. (p. 12).

Thus faith is not visible for psychological observation at all, a void (Barth: a "vacuum"). This is likewise true, of course, in the case of historical sciences, insofar as the latter would describe the visible actuality of human life in time. There is no history of faith. (p. 102). "All history of religion and Church take place entirely in the world." (p. 34). Faith is "faith only insofar as it lays claim to no historical and spiritual reality, but rather it is the unspeakable reality of God." (p. 33, cf. 59).

A religious apriori, a religious "urge" is always only a part of the world and has nothing to do with faith, if the latter is really concerned with God. When that is misunderstood, there arise theories in which "now the human or animistic events are elevated to experiences of God; now the being and acting of God are experienced as human or animistic experiences. The center in this fog is illusion, as if without the eradication of the given situation, apart from that truth which lies beyond birth and death, a unity or

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even only a readiness for an alliance between God and man exists. Religious experience, on whatever level it may take place, is, so far as it intends to be more than a vacuum, so far as it intends to be a sense, possession and partaking of God, the brazen and miscarriaged anticipation of that which can only be and become true through the unknown God. It is in its historicity, inanimacy and concreteness always the betrayal of God." (p. 25).

AS 7

So far, Barth is not original (in the relative sense which the word can only have here) in his ideas, but in the clear and weighty formulations. In fact, he stands thoroughly in the camp of the contemporary polemic against "historicism" and "psychologism." I do not say that in order "to understand him historically," but in order to grasp the fact, all the less so to judge Barth as his clarity and radicalness extend far over the usual polemic, in any case; all the less also as it is not basically a question for him of a modern stream of fashion, a reactionary appearance, a mere negation, but on the contrary. Here it is the self-consciousness that speaks which was always peculiar to living faith. No one has more clearly proclaimed the peculiarity and absoluteness of "religion" (faith!) out of this self-

consciousness than Wilhelm Herrmann, with whom Barth is here in complete agreement.¹

How little Barth may be taken as an indication of contemporary opinion is clearly shown in his Absage gegen alle Mystik. In it, it is a question only of an apparent flight from the world. To be sure it seeks to out distance "historicism", but religion remains nonetheless a psychical occurrence, an "experience". A new righteousness according to works replaces the old, whereby "the serenity before God Himself (if for example the proverbs of Angelus Silesius should be intended or read as psychological recipes!) is conceived of as the most clever urge of human piety, that "standing in the 'moment' (which is however not a moment where one can stand), as the highest, the most extreme human experience." "Thus as the triumph of Pharisaism, the new Pharisaism would be able to arise, more terrible than the first, which makes it possible to be not only self-righteous in everything, but also humble! Human righteousness is ca-

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What Herrmann called "experience" is not that against which Barth argues. And Herrmann's controversy against philosophy of religion and psychology of religion, as against mysticism, was not less radical than that of Barth.

pable of being everything, even self-exaltation and self-extinction if it has to be (Buddhism, mysticism, pietism).... Whoever boasts, whoever desires as a man to be right before man and before God will boast also continually of the deepest immersion into the "Nicht-Ich" and "Nicht-Sein" (whatever possible of his insecurity and brokenness) and --as a man (only as a man!) will stand there dogmatically." (p. 84, cf. 34f.). Faith is absolutely different from every myth and every mystique. "In the case of faith, it is not a question of elevating, deepening and enriching this life through the life to come of an 'inner' or even 'higher' world. It is not a question of one of those cosmical, metaphysical duplications, triplications, or multiplications by seven of a given permanency of our life and being, but of the ultimate and unique contrast, the peculiar and unbridgeable contrast of life to death, of being to non-being, of non-being to being. For faith, life and existence in the beyond is that which can only be called, from the point of view of life and being in this life, death and non-being, and on the other hand from the point of view of life and being in the life beyond and being in this life, only death and non-being." (p. 117). No "method" can lead to God. (p. 32,

85, 113). Grace is not to be gotten by the mystic's attitude of passivity. It would then be only a "human possibility." (p. 195).

A8 There arise two thoughts from what has been said. First-
 ly, there is the refutation of all pantheism, of all venera-
 tion of God-nature, all belief of immanence which would con-
 ceptualize God in the occurrences of nature or in a psychical-
 historical occurrence. God is neither power of nature nor
 psychological power. (p. 11). "God, as the highest affirma-
 tion of existence and essence of the world and of mankind,
 that is the unbearable, that is the 'not-God', in spite of
 the highest attributes with which we, in the most intense
 passion, praise Him." (p. 16). Whoever would come to God
 without having heard God's No about him and the world pre-
 viously attains only things of the beyond which in truth are
 modified things of this world. (p. 82, cf. 26, 57, 64f.).
 "Only in that which limits things in their independence and
 authenticity, ...only sub specie mortis does the glory of the
 Creator shine in them." (p. 147). "We must divest ourselves
 of the wonder before the pseudo-life which lies in our
 power to understand, this awe with which we precisely are
 justified before the divine mystery of the cosmos." (p. 292).

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"To want to understand the world in its unity with God is either a punishable religious presumption or a final insight into that which is beyond birth and death, an insight stemming from God." (p. 13). "Likewise, it is a sentimental, liberal self-delusion to believe that perhaps from nature and history, from art, morals, science or even religion, direct paths lead to the impossible possibility of God." (p. 321). Of course all that does not stem from a metaphysical dualism. It is not a question of an "equality of two neutralities", but of a "dialectical" difference between God and the world, of a "duality which becomes established in its abrogation, and whose abrogation is exactly its establishing." (p. 143, cf. 155, 167).

Subsequently, the other statement that every kind of flight from the world is illusion is also clear, that no asceticism, no self-chosen martyrdom points the way to God. (p. 138, 308, 352, 38). The "resurrection" of which faith is aware is "the negation of every position and negation of this world." (p. 446). And even if we find ourselves standing "deeper in the No than in the Yes, even if "the 'lowness' of our accidental life conditions" has relatively more testimonial value than the exaltations (p. 446 - 448!),

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one nevertheless only sins more and more, if one would intend to escape from the world of our psychical, historical life. Consequently, let there be no contempt for art and science, no cult of "irrationality", also no flight from religion and Church as the visible, historical spheres in which we move! All the radicality of anti-religious polemic is only an illusionary radicalism. (p. 223, cf. 203f.). "One should not want to flee the ambiguous historical reality of religion, and it has been taken care of that one cannot flee from it. Grace is grace there, where the religious possibility, taken most seriously and standing in full strength and development, is offered. Only there!" (p. 165, cf. 220). "For the true crisis in which religion finds itself exists in the fact that it not only cannot be cast off by man 'as long as he lives,' but also should not be shaken off, precisely because it is so significant for man as man (for this man!)," "precisely because in it the human possibilities are defined through the divine, and because we, in our consciousness, must stop and ponder on this human possibility that God is not here, that however we also are not able to proceed one step further, in order that God may confront us beyond the border which is designated by it." (p. 224).

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Therefore there is little fashionable polemic against "historicism" or "psychologism" or "rationalism" here, equally little fanaticism or Gnosticism. It is the simple -- Pauline -- radicalism which is certain about what faith and grace mean.

3. Faith as Wonder

What kind of meaning does then the negation of the world accomplished in faith have? This meaning is perceptible only from the point of view of faith itself; only from it is the concept "world" disclosed at all, which in its radical meaning can only be understood from the point of view of other-worldliness. Indeed it is a question of a "dialectical" contradiction, so that all inner-wordly criticism, every pessimism does not grasp it by far. On the contrary, the differences between "pessimism" and "optimism" become completely of no significance. (p. 131, 293). "Whoever says humanity, says unredeemed humanity. Whoever says history, says limitation and transitoriness. Whoever says I, says Judgment." (p. 59). "The world is our entire existence, as it then is and becomes under certainty through sins." (p. 146).

From such an attitude towards the world, faith in God

arises. "The discovery of absurdity is also the revelation of meaning." (p. 51). "The most primitive and the most advanced self-consciousness of the human spirit are to be discovered again and again in the insight of our finiteness and in the prospect of Him who limits, who is the abrogation of our finiteness." (p. 21). It is not a relativity which does not point back to the Absolute from which it really lives, not an appearance of death which is not precisely the testimony of our participation in the life of God, the testimony of the relationship of God to us, not interrupted through sin." (p. 148). "The knowledge of unbroken servitude is also the perception of freedom. The dread before perishableness is also the hope of unperishableness." (p. 293). --How is that to be understood? A misunderstanding suggests itself here. Is it a question of a simple procedure with the help of which, out of the limitation of the world of which we become more conscious, one may arrive at Him who limits, at God? Is it a question of the fact that we pronounce that No over the world in the knowledge of the uncertainty of our existence and that we then recollect that a No always only exists in relation to a Yes; and that we would have then a kind of ontological proof of God, the conclusion from the con-

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cept onto the existence? That is the way it almost appears. "The place from which the entire completed circle as such is to be viewed can itself not lie within the circle. The possibility to comprehend that which is humanly possible as such in its limitation is evidently...an entirely unheard of new possibility... With the question of the 'whither' of our knowledge of ourselves we happen directly upon the existentiality of the new man standing opposite this man." (p. 254f., cf. 66).

An obscurity surrounds such formulations, as if it were a question in faith of a conscious event in which a first and then a second is differentiated: first the No, then the Yes. With the help of a conclusion one arrives from the first to the second. Only that is not Barth's actual intention; for "even that negating, the insight into the paradox of life, the submission under God's judgment is it not; even the brokenness, the attitude of the 'biblical man' is it also not, insofar as it would be attitude, standpoint, method, system, matter..." (p. 32). No, this negation of the world is not a standpoint, but the experience of the divine judgment. That No is not the prerequisite in a conclusion; on the contrary, if it is a real No, it contains that Yes within itself.

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It also is not a question of a 'before' and an 'after' in consciousness. The Yes can also be the primary item in the consciousness of the believer (if I may use Barth's meaning). To contest this would mean a falling back into psychologism. For that reason that may be so because the No which is pronounced over the world is not the inner-wordly criticism of a defiant, resigning or confused pessimism (Schopenhauer, Spitteler), i.e., a No which always only proceeds from man who would like to have the world other than it is, therefore really proceeding from a human Yes. But the No which is of importance in faith is that pronounced by God. "Whoever knows the limitation of the world through a contradictory truth, the limitation of himself through a contradictory will, whoever therefore confesses finally this contradiction and dares to undertake to establish his life on it, that one believes." (p. 14). This contradiction is not a point of view, but a crisis in which we are placed by God. That man awakes "to the consciousness of this situation, that he becomes aware of the crisis and perceives it as a divine crisis, that he chooses in this crisis the fear of the Lord, that he hears and understands as Yes the No of God, because it is the No of God, only that is his faith." (p. 99). "We must

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take upon ourselves the full paradox of the human life situation. It exists in the fact that we, if we attain at all the consciousness of ourselves and our situation in the world, through the holy demand of God which confronts us in the recognized problematics of our existence, are led further, step by step, to the ultimate possibility in which we, seeing, wasting away, beseeching, crying out of deepest despair, spread our arms towards the great Unknown, towards that Yes, which stands opaquely opposite that No in which we are captive --and that we then must apprehend that even such a life, wasting away, beseeching, and crying does not justify, redeem, save us, that we in so doing have only affirmed and sealed the fact that we --are men." (p. 69). "Naked" must man stand before God (p. 43, 85, 39f.); only thus is it significant that he is "judged, but precisely thereby put to right." (p. 69)

Only so can it be true and not a mere consequence, even if it is presented in the form of such a consequence: "Man can understand himself in his unredeemed state only from the standpoint of redemption. As a sinner only through justification. As dead only through life. Only on God can man

who have respect before God and honor His transcendence live with God." (p. 17). Therefore "the ultimate submission under God's wrath is faith in His righteousness." (p. 52).

Moreover it is clear what the often repeated expression means that faith is a "vacuum" (eg. p. 17: "The faith of man is the awe which can be satisfied by this No, the will to be a vacuum, the pathetic persisting in negation."), of course, not that faith is a readily receptive container, a human organ for God's revelation, but on the contrary, that it is only an executor through which revelation makes itself noticeable within the historical perspicuity (p. 5), in which the message of faith itself is presented. (p. 12). The ultimate remainder of a psychical-historical perspicuity, the ultimate remainder of a character of works is said to be gotten from faith through negative designation. To be sure, that expression is not pleasing, and not even appropriate because from the standpoint of historical visibility, faith cannot not only be perceived as a vacuum, but cannot be perceived at all. No, if faith is to be described according to our consciousness, then it cannot not otherwise be described than as obedience, as submission, as surrender. (eg. p. 58, 62, 390f.). He who believes stands on the place "where only God can hold us, ...where everything else, be-

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sides God Himself, God alone, is out of consideration, on that place which is no place at all, but only the moment of stimulation of man by God, the true God, who is the creator and redeemer of man and everything human, where man surrenders himself and everything human to Him." (p. 85). "To have faith means to submit oneself to the judgment which means unhesitatingly the universal situation between God and man." (p. 351).

It is likewise obvious that this submission can be neither resignation nor human despair, nor a methodically worked out inner attitude; faith is only understandable as wonder, i.e., not understandable at all. "Faith is wonder, or it is not faith" (p. 350); it is the "absolute, vertical wonder." (p. 35, cf. 34, 77). The perception obtained in faith, the divine Yes in the divine No is not a visible possibility, but lies beyond the boundary of humanity. (p. 213). Credo quia absurdum. (p. 86). Faith is the "breaking in of God Himself." (p. 50). "God is always removed, new, distant, strange, superior to man, never in his reach, never in his possession. He who says God, always says wonder. God stands before the soul of man as Either-Or; there is therefore no human choosing or declining, affirming or negating, awaking or sleeping through, understanding or misperceiving of God.

However, the rejecting, negating, sleeping through, mis-understanding of God, the not-seeing of the unseeable, the incomprehension of the incomprehensible is possible, probable, visible and perceptible --as certain as man has no organ for wonder, as certain as all human experiencing and understanding ends precisely there where it begins, in God. Insofar as it comes humanly to an affirmation and understanding of God, insofar as the psychical occurrence receives the direction to God, the certainty from God, assumes the form of faith, the impossible, the wonder, the paradox occurs." (p. 96). Thus it is again only a picturesque expression, an attempt to designate the invisible from the observable, if faith is designated as chance, as a leap into space. (eg. p. 73, 74, 81, 126, 182). This risk is not a "work," but is the self-appropriation of the divine No which itself is already a wonder. (p. 16).

Faith may be characterized as beginning, as creation from God (p. 211, 483), but as a repetitive beginning, a new creation. "This change is a continuous ending and resigning, an untiring, uncorruptible wanting to decrease, decline, step down, die, a continually renewing proceeding from the naked, neutral humanity in its complete poverty and doubtfulness." (p. 108). "Consequently, faith is never complete,

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never given, never certain. It is, seen psychologically, always the leap into the unknown, into darkness, into empty space. Flesh and blood do not reveal that to us (Mt. 16.17); no man can tell another, not even himself, what it is. What I heard yesterday, I must hear today anew, and must hear it anew tomorrow. And it is always only He who reveals, Jesus' Father in heaven, only He." (p. 73).

The new I, the justified I, is not "observable" as a psychical-historical greatness, such that the believer may then differentiate himself from the non-believer for our knowing and consciousness. "Our justification really is and remains only as God's justification." (p. 77). Perhaps faith is real exactly with such men who stand outside of "religion!" "In their serene creatureliness and worldliness, in the simple unpretentious actuality of their doing they are known by God and in turn know Him, they are not without insight into into the past of everything human, not without a view of the silver horizon of redemption and forgiveness, which surrounds the dark cloud of our existence, not without respect before that No which separates the created from the creator, and before that Yes which makes them creatures of the creator... Perhaps it is the ultimate, most evil skepticism, an entire insufficiency for every 'higher' thing, complete inability to

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be impressed by anything; but perhaps precisely for that reason and therein is an actual brokenness, a sense for God, for God Himself. Nagging unrest perhaps, every fault-finding protest and inner turmoil; but precisely for that reason and therein is the allusion to the peace of God, "which passes all understanding." (p. 41f.; cf. the frequent allusion to the figures of Dostoevsky.). The justified man is "the inner, the unobservable man, the man called into existence by God's creative word, the man who is not he, who in the wasting away of this man is renewed from day to day." (p. 101). "The grace of creation as well as the grace of redemption is nowhere to be found as a fact among other facts. It is an unobservable relation in which all facts stand, and their perception is always and universally dialectical." (p. 111). That I am justified through faith is a paradox. "I am not this subject, so far as it as subject is that what is absolutely otherworldly. The radical otherliness is opposite to everything that I am. And I am this subject, so far as that what it does, its predicate 'faith', exists precisely in the plane of identity between it and myself." (p. 125). "The truth that we are new men exists for us always and everywhere in its point of departure." (p. 126). We may never be assured that we believe, but only

believe that we believe. (p. 126). Once again, faith is not a blissful, happy feeling (p. 127), but brings men to the awesome inner unrest. Perhaps a word from H. Hesse's Demian may clarify this faith that man believes. "The life of every man is a path to itself, the attempt of a path, the suggestion of a path. No man has ever been entirely by himself; everyone strives to achieve it, however, one apathetically, one lucidly, each as he is able."

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Barth describes in continuously new turns of expression the great paradox of faith: the plane of identity of the observable with the unobservable I, of the unredeemed man with the justified. It is a paradox, an "impossible possibility"; for the redeemed man is that "unobservable, new subject constructed beyond all continuity with the psychologically visible human subject." (p. 134). "There is then the fact which defines the new man over against all human meaning of life in essential superiority and priority. It never was our meaning of life and it will never become it, because it is in its being the critical negation of all meaning of life." (p. 137, cf. 140f., 178f., 182, 185f., 281). "May it be unavoidable a thousand times that I, as that I am in my observable being, knowing and doing, make myself guilty of sin, that I, as a recipient of grace, placed

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in relation to that that I am not, the new man, may not once count on the possibility of this unavoidableness." (p. 180f.; cf. 188f.). "We may then, as is appropriate, even stand under the Law -- and stand all the more under grace. We are then 'godly' --as if we were not. We live with our experiences passing us by, or we live by them." (p. 221, cf. 222, 267, 297f., esp. 274f.).

4. Faith and Consciousness

The following is then clear. This radicalness which does not shy away from paradox, even from the appearance of blasphemy intends only to express the fact that faith, that justification is an absolute wonder. But isn't the paradox stretched too thin? Is faith, when it is separated from every psychical event, when it is beyond consciousness, something that is real? Isn't the entire speaking about this faith a speculation, and to be sure, an absurd one? What does it mean to speak of my I which never is my I? What is this faith of which I am not conscious, of which I at best may believe that I possess it? Isn't this asserted identity between my observable and unobservable I in fact a speculation after the manner of Gnosticism or anthroposophism,

which also speaks of the relation of my I to higher worlds, a relation which is beyond my consciousness actually and is really very inconsequential to me? "Certainly, even faith always has its 'set' side. It is also a course of events and a condition. But precisely according to this its observable, psychical-historical side, precisely as a conceivable course of events and attainable condition, exactly as a possible possibility, faith is manifest without its peculiar dynamic. It establishes no certainty. It is 'emptied'... Faith establishes certainty, insofar as it is the ultimate step into the total unobservable, and therefore is itself unobservable. Every observable course of events and condition, every temporal way, every describable method and pragmatism which accompanies it is also its negation." (p. 110).

Apparently that is the answer to our question. But an in clarity seems immanent to me here, even if I believe myself to be basically one with Barth. Certainly our justification is not an experience (in the Barthian sense: a psychical event), not a conscious event. It is available with God, even without our knowing it. And we can only say about it that we believe it. That we, however,

can only believe that we believe is at least not the opinion of Paul for whom faith on the contrary is the conscious receiving of the message of salvation, the conscious obedience under God's new order of salvation. And that corresponds well to the matter. A faith beyond consciousness is however not the "impossible possibility," but in every sense an absurdity. Certainly the sentence just quoted is correct that the peculiar dynamic of faith does not lie in its observability as an occurrence of consciousness. But does it follow that believing is not that becoming conscious of that identity of the observable with the unobservable subject?

Perhaps this unclarity lies in Barth's conception of the "observable." His polemic against faith as meaning of consciousness rests in the fact that he always understands consciousness only as a psychical process, not as the psychical content which becomes "visible" in such a process. It is however remarkable that in the above quoted sentence, one could replace "faith" with "scientific thinking," "ethical aspiration," "artistic-like" conditions without losing its meaning. For in fact, the contents of our consciousness have meaning and significance, irregardless of the fact that they are observable in consciousness as a process

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(psychologically and historically understood), without their having existence outside of consciousness. Thus faith does not lose its dynamic because it is the content of consciousness. Indeed it is only faith, insofar as it is that. But of course consciousness is not understood here as a psychical process and not as a reflection. For as little as the laws of this behaviour are or must be conscious in the case of scientific thinking, moral aspiration or artistic-like conditions, even so little must a reflection on his faith be present in the case of a believer. However, faith is thoroughly a peculiar certainty of the contents of our conscious. In the sense of Paul, it would be simple to differentiate between justification and faith. Justification is the act of God before or above time. Faith is the paradoxical fact of the appropriation of justification by man (this man) in his consciousness. (This concept of faith approaches then the Barthian concept "impression of revelation," an equally paradoxical, "impossible" concept.) Perhaps one may illuminate the problem 'faith and consciousness' also by becoming aware of the fact that faith is not without confession (cf. Rom. 10.9ff.), and this confession does not need to be, of course, a confession with thoughts

or words, but may find utterance equally well in the action, in the attitude of man. Even my faith in other men, my love, my thankfulness are not only "observable" events, have their meaning not as psychical processes, and I do not need to "know" anything about them. But they are, however, not outside of my consciousness, and they are not without "confession".

A.J.A
So strictly does Barth define faith against every psychical process (with complete right!), so much does he emphasize the creative character (with complete right!), the always "being the beginning," that faith must be differentiated from the subject of speculation. Perhaps I do have all kinds of astral or other bodies, of which I am not aware. They could matter less to me, and a speculation which establishes the identity of my "observable" I with such astral bodies leaves me completely cold or is only amusing to me. My justification however and my faith are not some kind of pseudo, otherworldly facts, but my faith is a certainty of my consciousness. And that means that faith cannot exist without confession. However what faith is as confession seems to me to come too short by Barth.

5. Faith and Logos

It is therefore to be concluded that faith according to Barth is, to be sure, very strictly defined against the psychical-historical occurrence, but not against our psychical life, insofar as it is more than psychical processes, i.e., against the content of our psychical life. That is illustrated again by that sentence of p. 110, in which I want to replace "faith" with scientific knowledge (viz. moral aspiration, artistic-like conditions). Even scientific knowledge always has its "set" side (is also understood psychologically as a psychical event), is therefore a course of events, a condition. But precisely according to this its set, observable, psychical-historical side, exactly as a conceivable course of events and an attainable condition, precisely as a possible possibility, scientific knowledge is apparently without its peculiar dynamic. It establishes no certainty. It is "empty", i. e., the difference between true and false is given up because the false knowledge as a psychical act is equally as understandable as the true knowledge. Add to that what Barth says on p. 117 and p. 122 about the meaning of history. History as an observable event is, according to him, a mere struggle for existence. (p. 51, cf. 61f.) It

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acquires its meaning only through the unobservable, non- and supra-historical Logos. "On the other hand despite this non-historical element, the past remains silent and the present deaf." Certainly! And the rational idealistical observation of history which observes history "within the boundaries of humanity" also is cognizant of this Logos; even it knows that only that non- and supra-historical element causes the present to hear and the past to speak, and yet it knows nothing about that "revelation", but is active entirely in the "world". So it then seems a bit surprising by Barth, when on p. 451f. the ethos of grace is presented completely in the sense of the idealistical (Kantian) ethics. "It is the transcendental (never and nowhere as "purity" appearing!) purifying of the acts of all biological, pathetic, erotical elements." "An action is ethical, insofar as it, validated by the unobservable One in the All, appears in a controlling capacity over against the visible action of many," therefore a paraphrase of the "categorical imperative" (whereby the affinity to Kant is admitted by Barth.). But how does faith differentiate itself then from the theoretical and pragmatic Logos? What Barth says about the antithesis world and God is equally valid for the antithesis nature and psychical life (culture), as sure as both --nature and

culture-- is "world" from the view-point of God. One does not do the problem of culture justice when one views culture, as does Barth, simply as a product of nature. Thereby a part is broken off basically from the radicalness of the concept of faith, insofar as what basically is valid about culture cannot be perceived as nature because culture is eliminated from the point of view of God, and thereby God is secularized. And the interpretation of the world and mankind sub specie of the dialectical antithesis of Yes and No threatens to develop into a transcendental philosophy. Wilhelm Herrmann was more aware of this point.

6. The Way to Faith

However, on another point Barth advances beyond Herrmann, namely, in the question "How do I come to believe?" Heitmüller in a speech² made excellently and strikingly clear wherein Luther's advancement over Paul lies, namely, in the question "How do I obtain a gracious God?" Paul demands obedience to the message of faith, and the question is not entertained by him, "How can I be obedient?" Obedience exists in the recognition of the proclaimed acts of salvation

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W. Heitmüller, Luthers Stellung in der Religionsgeschichte des Christentums, Marburg, Elwert 1917.

as the new plan of salvation of God. For Luther as the for
the true son of the Church, this recognition was self-evident,
but he saw that obedience does not actually lie therein, that
such obedience is dead, if it is not at the same time the
personal appropriation of the proclamation, the inner sub-
mission to revelation. Ritschl's successor Herrmann has al-
ways represented this idea with strong emphasis. Obedience
remains a "work" as long as it does not mean the inner state
of subduing by revelation. It is untrue so long as the real-
ity of God is not proven as the reality in my life. Obedi-
ence as an act of the will would be a "work"; real obedience
can only be the "free self-surrender" under the subduing and
encompassing (creative) impression of revelation. And there-
fore the question 'How do I come to believe?', i. e., "How do
I succeed in submitting to the inner truth of revelation?"
was of utmost importance.

Of course Herrmann has, by no means conclusively, but
still with strong emphasis, answered this question through
the reference to a psychologically understandable "exper-
ience", to a process, a psychical-historical occurrence.
And in so doing, he was not free of a pietistic movement.
His answer is compatible with the well-known theory of obe-
dience grounded in reason under the law of ethics, of doubt

which is the end of this path, of the encompassing of the forgiving grace of God in Jesus. To ask and to answer the question of the way to faith is false in this sense, and in that respect Barth is correct. The pupils of Herrmann also were often not satisfied with this scheme which does not coincide with Paul.³ And this scheme deprives, in fact, the wonder of faith of its high-point, or at least threatens it. In another sense however, the question 'How do I come to believe?' has its required meaning, if faith is said to be honest, true obedience.

It can only mean an evasion when one speaks about submission under the "objective," as is now vogue. For as certain as God is not the symbolizing of subjective "experiences," but that objectiveness, then so certain can that "objectiveness" only be actuality before which I bow, if it becomes actuality for me, -what it indeed only then and precisely then becomes when it destroys, nihilates my old I, the observable man. Just as one intends to make points for dogmas of old or new origin from the speech about the "objectiveness," so does one make faith into a work and God to

³cf. W. Heitmüller, Die Bekehrung des Paulus, ZThK 1917 (Festgabe für Herrmann), p. 136 - 152.

an idol, and truthfully, voids the character of the "objectiveness". And how many messages of faith offer the "objectiveness"! How many Messiahs are proclaimed! Where is the objectiveness to which I should submit myself? The question 'How do I come to believe?' stands therefore. And here, as it now often happens, to answer with the secret of predestination is an evasion or cynicism. For the concept of predestination can only be a speculation in this situation which ought to clarify something. The concept of predestination gains meaning only in the moment of faith.

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The question "Where is the objectiveness to which I should submit myself?" must read on the contrary, "Where is the objectiveness to which I can submit myself?" And with this insight, the question "How do I come to believe?" obtains its simple and clear meaning. It should be so answered that one shows what believing means. For in that the meaning of what believing is is made clear, faith is protected from every false defintion as a psychical event, is cut away from every "method". It becomes clear that the capacity to submit oneself is a necessity to submit oneself, and that the man who is caught up in this question "How do I come to believe?" cannot be given any other answer than that he should recollect himself, whether and where in his life he has en-

countered the reality to which he can sincerely submit himself, must submit himself. Inner sincerity is the only "way" to faith, sincerity which does not evade the ultimate question about the meaning of human existence, which is ready for the way to the "King of the dark chamber." That reality can never be made "observable", and the decision must be made by every man for himself. Others can only help him by attempting to say what faith means.

7. Christ

Or is there yet a segment of reality which may enter into the life of every man and which is "observable" as revelation of God? Herrmann used to answer 'Jesus'! That is, the inner life of Jesus which, perceived out of the evangelical tradition, encompassed the honest observer as reality (as the "objectiveness"), subdued, transformed, redeemed him as the living personification of holiness and love. Barth declines this answer, not only because he knows that New Testament research has lead to that understanding that we can probably know nothing or as little as nothing about the inner life of Jesus, but because Jesus as a man belongs to the psychical-historical actuality, to the "world" and that we would not have been helped by such a psychical-

historical descriptiveness. On the contrary, Barth's answer reads: Christ is the revelation of God. And here I must confess that I simply do not understand him. I can only envision contradictions.

According to Barth, there is an intersecting line, on either side of which the two levels, God and world, are separated. (May one seriously assert this when the antithesis between God and world is a purely dialectical one? But let us follow Barth's argument first!) "The point of the intersecting line, where it is to be discerned and is discerned, is Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, the 'historical' Jesus, 'born of the lineage of David according to the flesh.' 'Jesus' as a historical certainty signifies the point of separation between our known and unknown world. Time, objects and men, except inasmuch as they delineate that point which enables the concealed line of intersection of time and eternity, object and primal cause, man and God to become observable, stand out at this point of our known world no more than other times, objects and men. Thus the time of revelation and the time of discovery are the years 1 - 30." (p. 5). Of course, every other time may also become the time of revelation and discovery. But that is a possibility

which only is given by that fundamental period of revelation. (p. 5). For here we encounter actually in one place of time truth of another order, divine answer. (p. 71).

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And in what respect then does the divine world become visible in Jesus? "The life of Jesus...is the complete obedience towards the will of the true God. He offers himself as sinner to sinners. He places himself squarely under the judgment under which the world stands. He places himself there where God can be present only as a question concerning God. He assumes the role of servant. He goes to the cross, to death...Therefore God has exalted him, etc." (p. 70f.). One sees a paraphrase of Phil. 2.6ff., of the Pauline Christ-myth, nothing about the life of Jesus, about the historical Jesus. These sentences have meaning only when one already has a certain opinion about their subject (this "He"); the latter cannot be gained out of the psychological-historical descriptiveness, since it first elucidates the latter. In what respect, therefore, is revelation present in the life of Jesus? Compare other statements of Barth. (eg. p. 79ff., 156, 183, 259ff., 311). They all run in the same vein.

Along with these stand statements as the following, that in the life and death of Jesus, not an individual,

a personality, a single person, but the individual, the personality, the single person is illuminated as an act of obedience. (p. 160). "Neither Jesus' personality, nor the Christ idea, neither his Sermon on the Mount, nor his miracles, neither his faith in God nor his love of neighbor, neither his call for repentance nor his proclamation of forgiveness, neither his struggle against ethical religion nor his command to follow in poverty, neither the social nor the individual, neither the direct nor the eschatological aspect of his gospel" constitute the meaning of this "Christ". On the contrary, only the death on the cross in whose light all those possibilities appear as human possibilities; death in which the unobservable life becomes observable; death which signifies a dying for us, "insofar as in this dying, the invisible God becomes visible for us." (p. 136f., cf. p. 182f.). Thus we recognize in the Son of God ourselves, see in him the existentiality of the new man living in God, (p. 265), are ourselves "sons of God." (p. 279). As "I myself am he who is crucified, who comes under the image of the death of Christ," (p. 178), so "we believe our identity with the unobservable new man which appears beyond the death of the cross." (p. 182). Thus the resurrection of Jesus is precisely "not an event of historical dimensions beside the

other events of his life and death, but the 'non-historical' relationship of his entire historical life origin in God." (p. 175). "Therefore, if the resurrection itself were in any kind of sense a fact of history, then neither a strict protestation nor a refined deliberation would be able to hinder the fact that even they appear drawn into the seesawness of Yes and No, life and death, God and man which is characteristic of the historical plane." (p. 184).

Fine; but does this also not hold true precisely even for the "life of Jesus" in general? And moreover, what kind of meaning does it have to speak about the years 1 - 30 as the time of revelation? Isn't the "historical Jesus" really completely disregarded? "Jesus Christ, however, is the new man beyond this humanly possible man, beyond, above all, the pious man. He is the elevation of this man in his totality. He is the man who has come out of death into life. He is not I, my existential I, I which I am in God, in the freedom of God." (p. 252). I am able to comprehend all that only as the historical Jesus has become a symbol. That does not mean an idea (which Barth rightly denies on p. 136.), but also not an illuminating or aesthetically fascinating illustration of a general (intellectual) truth; but a symbol

of vivaciously present power, not by virtue of some kind of magic, but simply as verbum visible. (cf. Barth, p. 513: Jesus Christ "interprets God authentically for us, as He confronts us in the reality of our life!). The word speaks and is perceived, is therefore a living, present reality, whereby it is completely insignificant how the historical Jesus of Nazareth is to be fitted into connection with psychical-historical occurrences. Christ speaks equally as well from the crucified of Grünewald, so readily introduced by Barth, as from the Synoptic Gospels. And what does he say? He is, as he who was crucified and resurrected, the most powerful sermon of God about the judgment of God in which His No becomes His Yes, and he personifies "God's existentiality, illuminated by his uniqueness." (p. 259). "God is Personality, the Unique, the Only, the Otherliness and, as such, the Eternal and Almighty, nothing else, this by the proof of Jesus, the human, historical Jesus. But Jesus is the Christ. That is God's uniqueness illuminated by his existentiality, therefore the scandal of an eternal revelation in Jesus, in spite of all believing and unbelieving historicism and psychologism, a revelation of what truthfully even Abraham and Plato saw." (p. 260. cf. p. 365f.).

I do not know if I understand Barth correctly, but I can only explain his sentence "Jesus is a symbol for the truth." (sermon of truth) such that God's revelation is neither a psychical-historical fact, i. e., form, as such, so that one could read off directly the divine reality in the methodically perceived "observable" history --perhaps by its "high points," nor that it would be a revelation immanent to every "observable" occurrence, so that the attempts, therefore, of a certain liberalism to possess the revelation directly in the historical person of Jesus are equally as false as all pantheistic talk about the revelation of the "God-Nature" in the All, thus a symbol for the fact that God's revelation is present always non- and supra-historically, always un- and supernaturally, always only in a certain Now, in a certain man. Thus Christ is precisely a symbol, and to be sure, not as an idea (every rational observation disappears), but as verbum visible, as a vivaciously present power.

The more I try to make sense in the Barthian thought process out of faith and revelation, the more I do not see how I shall get beyond it. "Christ" is thus as much a "sign" according to Barth as is baptism "in its paradoxical uniqueness," (p. 171), or as Adam is, in whom the invisible

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No of God becomes visible, whereby the historicity of Adam is expressly explained by Barth as insignificant. (p. 149). In fact, Barth parallels Adam and Jesus in this sense: "In the one man Adam, the unobservable becomes observable, that God says No to us... In the one Jesus Christ, the unobservable becomes observable, that God does not cease to say Yes to us." (p. 156).

8. The Relationship to the Text

I have not exhausted the rich book, despite its one-sidedness, with my examining and critical argument. I have also consciously refused to discuss the relation of the new edition to the first, and hope that another will take on this task. I do not, however, intend to deny that the new edition has made an unequally deeper impression on me than the first. I have also refused to regard the book as a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans for the sake of clarity of the issue, which is basically the problem here. But it appears to me precisely for the sake of matter, in conclusion, a word about the relation of Barth to the text is necessary. In the interpretation of the task of the exegesis of the text as Barth develops it in the foreword, I am one with him entirely. As it is self-evident for him

that the philological, historical textual exegesis is the necessary side of exegesis, so it is self-evident to me that one can now only exegete a text when one has an inner relation to the matter which is being discussed in the text. And I also agree when Barth formulates the high point of exegetical understanding thus: As one who understands, I must push forward to that point where I stand almost only before the puzzle of the matter, almost not anymore before the puzzle of the document, where I almost forget that I am not the author, where I have almost understood it so well that I allow it to speak in my name and myself can speak in its name." In other words, the paraphrase --of course the greatest art of exegesis-- is the best commentary.

Yet I would call to Barth's attention that for him, this ideal has become a scheme, by the means of which he does injustice to the Epistle to the Romans and to Paul. I would, before I discuss that, admit again that Barth has perceived the view of Paul on faith deeply, and precisely so, that for me, many points have become more alive in his exegesis. But the conclusion that his "Commentary" does injustice to the individual life of the Epistle to the Romans and to the richness of Paul I must nevertheless proclaim. And to be sure, it is not at all a question about a

more or less accurate or complete presentation of a psychical-historical certainty, but about the comprehension of the matter.⁴ The "measuring" of all the "words and groups of words contained on the matter" in the document to be exegeted which Barth correctly demands in the foreword, cannot, if it is seriously intended, occur without criticism. And to be sure, this criticism is much more radical than the historical, philological criticism. It is also not the criticism from a stand-point taken from outside of the text and its content, which Barth correctly dismisses for exegesis (p. xiv), even if it is correct in other connections. Moreover, it is the consequential result of the correctly regarded supposition to understand the text through its content. One must measure on the content how far in all the words and sentences of the text the content really adequately is expressed. For what else should "measuring" mean? About such measuring and the radical criticism found in it, I do not find anything by Barth. That everywhere in the Epistle to the Romans the content must have gained adequate

⁴Moreover that I highly agree to what Jülicher has presented in this Zeitschrift 1920 Nr. 29 and 30 first edition, as well as what concerns the historical, philological exegesis, as well as what concerns the factual conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans and of Paul, Barth will understand partly from what is said and partly confess to himself.

expression is, however, an impossible presupposition, if one does not intend to erect a modern dogma of inspiration. And such appears to be in the background of Barth's exegesis, unfortunately for the clarity of the matter. One would do Barth himself also no favor if one were to read his book without criticism, if one, for example, wanted to over-look the high degree the neo-Kantian (Cohenian) terminology has influenced his word and thought, or if one did not think that many an antithesis is grounded in the origin of the author in the field of psychoanalysis, that many formulations apparently are determined by contemporary readings (and in a new edition, perhaps will share the fate of similar expressions, namely to disappear) --briefly, if one would forget that the matter is greater than the word defining it. And I think, it is no lack of respect if I say the same for Paul and his Epistle to the Romans, that the same also holds true. And if I prove by the exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans tension and conflict, height and depth, when I attempt to show where Paul is dependent on Jewish theology or popular Christianity, on Hellenistic Enlightenment or Hellenistic sacramental belief, then I am doing not only historical, philological criticism (at least not then, when I do not conceive of my task as exegete as

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mechanical), but I do it under that point of view to show where and how the issue is expressed, whereby I grasp the matter which is greater even than Paul. And I am of the opinion that such a criticism may serve the clarity of the matter. For the stronger I feel that it is a question of the saying of the unsayable by this matter (and Barth knows that very well), the more clearly I, as exegete, also will receive the relativity of the Word and extol it. And it is not only a question of the relativity of the Word, but also that no man, not even Paul, always only speaks to the issue. There are also other spirits being expressed in him than the pneuma Christou. And the criticism cannot be radical enough then. Such a criticism therefore is --it follows out of Barth's own principle from the "measuring on the issue"-- inseparable from exegesis and real history. Only in such criticism may historical work succeed to its final goal, in which it coincides with the systematic proceedings on another path: to the self-realization of the motives and powers, to the basis of our life.

The Problem of a Theological Exegesis of the New Testament

For exegesis in Lutheran Orthodoxy, the Bible is a book of teachings which have a direct relation to me, the reader, i. e., which do not purport to increase my theoretical knowledge, but to illuminate me to myself and to influence my life. As far as these authoritative teachings are regarded as universal truths, from this interpretation of the Bible the older rationalism proceeds accordingly, by seriously contending that the teachings of the Bible really are universal truths. If that is what they are, then they are truths founded on reason because reason is the authority by which the universally acceptable character of theses is determined. Whatever is found to be irrational in the Bible is given a new interpretation or explained as an adaption, i. e., as a historical limitation. As, however, the observation of the person limited historically, the individual becomes the end itself of consideration, because it allows for a differentiation of single books and groups and consequently makes possible an historical presentation, a turn is completed within rationalism. And there can arise the contemporary, historical exegesis (zeitgeschichtliche Exegese). Subsequently, the difference originally emphasized between individuals limited historically and the

eternal, rational truths collapse, and instead, the individual is understood as a case of an universal legality (Gesetzlichkeit) which creates unity in history.

This legality may be thought of in various ways. According to the idealistic, special Hegelian interpretation of history which through the Tübinger School dominated New Testament exegesis for an extended period of time, it is teleologically determined. The powers which move history are ideas which depict the moments of self-development of the intrinsic spirit, powers which acquire their actuality, however, only in the concrete process proceeding through individual phenomena, in which the intrinsic spirit becomes aware of itself.

More and more in place of or along side of the idealistic conception of man, determined basically by this conception of history, another, a natural interpretation is formed, according to which man is a product of situations. And accordingly, the legality of history is thought of as determined causally. The thoughts, ideals, institutions of an epoch or of an individual may be thoroughly explained as a result of a development. And if personality (its irrationality!) is included as a factor in the process, the

accompanying interpretation of personality is the same natural interpretation. The irrational, which one here takes into account, is none other than that with which the geological history of the earth also reckons, because why the formation (Gegebenheit) of stone shifts precisely so and not otherwise is, is not able to alter the situation. And the irrational, the "X", is basically the reason why the being of persons precisely is not observed in what produces the essence (Wesen) of history.

The causal powers which motivate history may be thought of in different ways. Man may be viewed biologically, endowed with different capacities for thinking and perceiving, moral inclination, etc., and history exists in the developing of these capacities. Because one would not arrive at history from this position, but only at a natural, biological history of man, the stimuli which lie in the scientific, social and political necessities are required for the emergence of the historical movement. Indeed, these alone could dominate the picture and the history of Christianity could become sociology. On the other hand, the biological interpretation of man can be carried over from the individual onto humanity as a species, so that the entire historical movement may be presented as a biologically observable mor-

phology.

Since man more or less is viewed in general psychologically, the psychological point of view may be made the dominant one, with the danger that the understanding of the historical movement is subsequently lost and interpretation becomes a psychological analysis of individuals and groups. As a rule, the danger is not apparent, because without fundamental clarity, all other interpretations of man and history are included in this claim. Essentially however, the psychological point of view dominates in the so-called religionsgeschichtliche exegesis, as is immediately revealed by the fact that it permits the "teachings" of the Bible to retreat behind experiences and moods and that it makes "piety" the theme of the presentation of history. The cult and mysticism become of special interest. Institutions are explained as much as possible from their conception out of primitive conditions (understood psychologically). The conclusion is opportunely drawn, in my opinion, as a phenomenologically designated method of observation which consciously suppresses the point of view of historical causality and tolerates a reformed psychology as phenomenology.

As a reaction against the causally determined and psychological interpretation of man and history, a method

of observation is being brought over to the New Testament presently in another area, represented by men as Gundolf, Bertram and Reinhardt, in which man is seen as "Gestalt", i. e., from an aesthetical point of view. A creative foundation, a power center is assumed, out of which the form (Gestalt) in a pre-experience and in later experiences grows, formed by the powers which radiate from the center of the personality. It could scarcely come to an historical movement in the sense of developmental history if the peoples and cultures also were not viewed as forms, whereby the biological point of view, which is efficacious in the Goethe succession from the very beginning in this romantic observation, would become dominant again.

II

In all these cases the original approach by which the text makes its demand on the reader is given up, i. e., not that it lets itself be observed, but the fact that it intends to influence the reader in his existence. On the contrary, in all these cases the text is viewed objectively. One wants to see "what is there," from the presupposition that that is perceptible, indeed only perceptible through an objectification of one's own perspective, under the presupposi-

tion therefore, as if one may interpret the texts without interpreting the deeds at the same time, about which they speak. On the basis of the texts interpreted in this manner, one hopes to understand history without asking oneself if there are not perhaps essential realities in history which one perceives only when one abandons one's objective observation, when one is ready to assume a point of view. Of course, New Testament exegesis does not say that which is there does not concern one in the end. However, the exegesis itself is not determined by this "tua res agitur," but proceeds from the open, neutral position of the exegete. The historical and psychological exegesis proves above all, without reflecting over the meaning and claim of what was spoken, that at that time, this has been thought, said and done under such and such historical circumstances and psychological conditions. Insofar as a single thing possesses a meaning lasting beyond the moment, it has one if it is seen under the point of view of legality (mostly of causal legality), and history becomes, subsequently, one great continuity of relationships in which every single phenomenon is relative. And the undertaking to reconstruct lost history then may arise. If it is correctly constructed, then for the observer, it stands on the same level with that which is

viewed on the basis of given sources.

It does not help matters that here, as elsewhere, one would like to promote a return to the idealistic interpretation of history. For in the latter, it is only illusory that it analyzes the text from the view point of the "tua res agitur." This impression arises from the fact that single historical phenomena are understood as the objectification of the spirit in its historical movement, in which the subject participates as he interprets. Thus in the interpretation of the essence (Wesen) of the spirit, he derives a clarity subsequently of himself. To be sure, the coördination of the interpreter to history takes place, while in the other cases he stands immediately beside it. However, even here the distance of the observer to history is not overcome, because in this case, the exegete sees himself from the same distance as he sees history, on account of the fact that he considers himself only as a special case of mankind and all individuality as an expression of the legality of development. That means: The coördination of the existential (existentiell) subject to history does not take place at all, least of all when the existence of man is to be found not in the universal, in reason, but in the individual, in the concrete moment of

the Here and Now. Precisely for that reason, the idealistic observer sees nothing in history which makes a demand on him in that sense that something new would be said to him here which he does not potentially have already, which does not already stand at his disposal, by virtue of his participation in the universal reason. He discovers nothing that confronts him as authority. By reducing the content of history to the movement of ideas which are present in the reason of man, he finds always only himself in history. He has at his disposal, therefore, from the very beginning all the potentialities of historical occurrences. Therefore, even here the undertaking to reconstruct past history may appear meaningful.

However, this is precisely the deciding question, whether we stand over against history in such a manner that we recognize its demand on us, that it has something new to say to us. If we give up this neutrality towards the text, that means that the question of truth dominates the exegesis. The exegete is not interested then in the final analysis in the question 'What does that which is spoken (as that which is merely spoken) mean in its historical setting, in its historical connection?', but he asks ultimately, 'What kind of things are being talked about, to what kind of matters does

that which is spoken lead?' However that means, because it is not a question concerning the explanation of nature, but about the understanding of history to which we ourselves belong, 'What does it mean for me and how is it to be understood in its objective proof?' Subsequently, it remains for the time being an open problem, in what connection both questions are related in the concrete work of the exegete, whether and in how far the one can be answered without the other. It is then not at all the intent of this self-consciousness to do away with all older methods on the basis of a newer method, but only to ask how far they lead, when it is left to us to attain the reality of history.

We will formulate the question as follows for the time being. The history oriented exegesis asks "What is said?" And we ask instead, "What is intended?" Of course in a certain sense, the history oriented exegesis also asks 'what is intended?' Yet it poses this question in such a fashion that the entirety of history is, as it were, sketched on a flat surface, a map. Then out of the most extensive knowledge available of the surrounding area, a field or a point is supposed to be recognizable on this map. All light which bestows knowledge of history is at once concentrated on this

one point which is to be discovered. The matter oriented exegesis (Sachexegese) views this map, on the other hand, as transparent, and would like to grasp the penetrating light which is on the other side of the plane of history. It believes that only then is it able to grasp what is intended. Of course, the picture is incomplete, for psychology could also describe its work in history in a similar fashion.

In the meanwhile psychology would remove itself only further from that which is intended in the text, because from the very beginning it accepts all statements only as assertions of a certain, regularly repetitive psychical life, while in the matter exegesis, one asks what facts are meant with the statements. The author who speaks in the text had not intended in any case to make a statement which exhausts its meaning in the historically fixed, relative moment, but wanted to touch upon circumstances which lie beyond the association of relationships. Whoever for example interprets the teaching of justification of Paul in a way that he derives its assertions from the conversion experience brings out perhaps what Paul has said, but certainly not what he meant. If one understands the view of Paul that the Christian does not sin anymore because of his enthusiasm, i. e., because of his psychical state of inspiration, in which it is a matter of

fact for him that the Christian could do only the good, and if one supports oneself with the traditional notion of the purification in the messianic age, then one explains in a pince the statements of Paul as events in the developmental process of a psychically inclined Jew. One never explains however what Paul actually meant, to which circumstances he wanted to call attention. Whoever makes the "religious life" or the "vitality" of Paul the theme of his interpretation of Paul, interprets evidently something that had not interested Paul in the least. On the contrary, he interprets a historical or psychical phenomenon. As a result, I leave open the question, whether and how far such interpretations are able to make use of some preliminary preparation in order to approach the matter itself.

Therefore the following may also be said. The historical and psychological exegesis, as well as the matter-exegesis, all intend to interpret the word of the text. From the beginning however, the latter claims to understand the word as an essential expression of an expressive individual (which can also be a sociological organization), whereby it makes little difference whether the individual is observed as a subject of psychical complexes and functions or aes-

thetically, idealistically as a personality, character or form (Gestalt), or naturalistically, evolutionally as an exponent of a certain historical situation. In all these cases, the word of the text is not capable of speaking to the interpreter in any real sense because he has at his disposal from the beginning and fundamentally all the possibilities of what can be and may be said, namely, with the help of the principle of his procedure of observation. Without a doubt, the original and true meaning of the word "word" is that it calls attention to the circumstances lying outside the speaker, that it intends to disclose the latter to the hearer and make it the event for the hearer. The possible pretext of an idealistic exegesis that it meets these demands rests on the fact that it does not conceive of the individual speaker as a psychical or a historically determined subject, to be sure, by the fact that it can thus elucidate his assertions as references to trans-subjective circumstances. However these circumstances are not those meant here, since they cannot become the event for the hearer. On the contrary, since their content is the system of reason, the essence of the intellectual spirit, they contain only that which stands at the disposal of the interpreter, a rational subject from the beginning. The matter-exegesis

would more seriously adhere to the original and true meaning of the word "word" by intending to understand it as a reference to circumstances.

The character of this matter-exegesis is yet more exactly determined by the fact that for it the possibility and the necessity of a critique of the matter (*Sachkritik*) is established, a criticism namely which differentiates between that which is spoken and that which is intended, and which measures that which is spoken on that which is intended. Insofar as the historical exegesis of any assertions of the text is proven to be well founded, albeit they are somewhat primitive or awkward, unclear or contradictory, it may appear to be Sachkritik. However, here the measuring stick is the formal logic or the point of view of the immanent development, not the matter which is being discussed. And it is only apparently different when the text in the historical exegesis is criticized from the standpoint of the modern consciousness, in which, for example, Baumgarten's exegesis on the First Epistle in the Göttinger Bible is a good example. Since according to its own presuppositions the historical (as well as the psychological) exegesis is able to claim only relative validity for its declarations, this art of criticism is naively in-

consequential and says basically nothing at all. One wonders why it would bother to interpret a text at all other than for interested antiquarians, since it knows everything better than the text. Why does it summon the reader to the New Testament at all? The Sachkritik demanded by the matter-exegesis can attain its measuring stick only from the matter disclosed through the text which previously did not stand at its disposal. The "point of view" reached in such a Sachkritik has nothing to do with "value judgment" which subsequently would be brought to bear upon the historical find. The matter-exegesis is consequently in a peculiarly ambiguous or contradictory situation, since it approaches that which is intended only through the spoken and still measures that which is spoken by that which is intended. That means that it never attains the universally binding declarations as "products", but is always in a living movement.¹

III

The differentiation of both questions, 'what is said?' and 'what is intended?' is a primitive, provisional formula-

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That such an exegesis has nothing to do with "intuition" need scarcely be said explicitly.

tion. However, the difference at which this differentiation aims may become more apparent if one asks, "On the basis of what presuppositions is it asked: What is intended?", i. e., when one asks about the area in which that which is intended lies and about its accessibility for the exegete. For both those questions do not openly differentiate between themselves, if that which is intended is nothing other than a historical fact. Of course if historical facts (eg. the death of Jesus or the missionary journeys of Paul) are not reported as such, but with a certain intention, the question 'what is intended?' arises in the differentiated sense, and to be sure, of course not in the sense as if one asks about the subjective intention and frame of mind of the reporter, whereby instead of the one historical fact only another is understood.

The differentiation of both questions occurs depending on how the possibilities of that which is intended extend beyond the mere historical (or psychical) fact. Generally, it may be said that the area of that which is intended extends as far as the possibilities of mankind reach. For the interpreter, the accessibility depends on how far he is open to the range of the possibilities of mankind. Ulti-

mately the question of the potentiality of understanding a text depends on what kind of openness the exegete possesses for his potentiality of existence as a human potentiality, what kind of interpretation of himself as a man the exegete has.

When one, however, has driven the question so far, one suddenly becomes aware that that original differentiation between a neutral and an opinionated exegesis, between an objective exegesis and an exegesis which grasps the demands of the text -- that this differentiation also is primitive and inadequate. It was brought about through the image of the modern exegesis of itself, but this image is a self-illusion. Actually there is no neutral exegesis. There is no mere exegesis of that "what is there," but the exegesis of the text always goes, in some kind of a fashion (and to be sure situationally determined), hand in hand with the self-interpretation of the exegete. Because we do not stand over against history as we do nature, by which we are able to orient ourselves in objective thinking. On the contrary, since we ourselves stand in history and are a part of that history, every word which we say about history is necessarily also a word about ourselves, i. e., it betrays

how we interpret our own existence. It shows what kind of openness we possess for the potentialities of our existence as human beings. The idealist questions the text on what level of development its assertions stand in the process of self-development of the spirit, viz. what meaning do they acquire when they are measured on the ideal conception of the spirit; what distinctive character do the assertions have in a scientific or ethical field. In so questioning, he reveals that for him the actual being of man lies in reason, in ideas. The romanticist knows man only as form (Gestalt), as personality, i. e., ultimately, as a work of art, as shaped matter. For him the actual human way to exist is the aesthetical view and form. For the psychologist man is the subject of psychical complexes and incidents. For him the really human way to exist means to be in psychical situations, in moods and experiences.

Insofar as a certain self-interpretation is basic to every exegesis, no exegesis is neutral, and to that extent, it may be said that every exegesis recognizes a claim of the text, namely, because a demand to understand oneself, which lies in the possibilities of the text, is heard each time. To that extent, the differentiation of the two questions,

'what is said?' and 'what is intended?' proves to be unsatisfactory because no exegesis intends to nor can simply reproduce the intonation of words of the text. Yet it would somehow like to say 'what is intended.' In the meanwhile, those differentiations do aim at a real, basis difference. For the fact remains that all of those exegetical possibilities proceed from the fact that the exegete basically has at his disposal the possibilities of that which is spoken, i. e., that which is intended, that the word of the text does not become for him an event (an event of time), that the text does not stand before him as authority which has something essentially new to say to him.² That means however, that all these possibilities proceed from the interpretation of human existence as an accessible, established interpretation. The matter-exegesis stands opposite them as that which is grounded in a basically different interpretation of human existence. Here human existence is not seen in an over-all view which approaches man as an example of the "Gattungsmensch". On the contrary, he is seen in his individual life which moves in temporality with its moments of

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That is even made expressly the principle when the demand of the "congeniality" of the exegete is advanced.

oneness and non-recurrence, with its events and decisions.

That is, that our existence is not at our disposal, is not secured, but insecure, problematical, that we therefore are ready to hear words as words, to hear questions which mean decision for us, to hear the claim of a text as authority, by which it becomes necessary to decide.

It is fully clear then, that the demand to see the existence of man not in the general but in the specific is not satisfied through the interpretation of man as "form". For an interpretation which would observe the inner form of a Gestalt overlooks the concrete existence of man. It also sees the concrete Here and Now as an incident in the over-all, only that the over-all is not the legality (Gesetzlichkeit) apprehensible in thinking, but the individual law of the particular form. One can only interpret his existence in such a manner, if one places oneself over against it as a timeless entity, or better as one of the past, thus precisely not at the moment when one recognizes his Here and Now as moments of decision which lead to a future as well as into an entirely different Here and Now. The interpretation of man as Gestalt is always only possible subsequentially, X when all of life lies closed before one. That is, the meaning

of temporality for the existence of man is misunderstood here. And that case is also then no different when the process of becoming of the Gestalt is seen from the point of view of development, because the movement, which is here the issue, does not contain the moment of temporality. On the contrary, the latter is eliminated as a real movement and serves only as a scheme, i. e., in the process of becoming of development, being disintegrates into its moments, but in such a way that the entire thing is ideally there at every level and that the individual moments do not bring anything new and do not have therefore the character of decision. That is expressed classically in Goethe's earlier words ($\Delta\alpha\imath\mu\omega\nu$):

Wie an dem Tag, der dich der Welt verliehen,
die Sonne stand zum Grusse der Planeten,
bist alsbald und fort gediehen,
nach dem Gesetz, wonach du angetreten.
So musst du sein, dir kannst du nicht entfliehen,
so sagten schon Sibyllen und Propheten;
und keine Zeit und keine Macht zerstückelt
geprägte Form, die lebend sich entwickelt.*

The possibility also exists thoroughly to answer the accusation of subjectivism. Of course, every exegesis, as an

*According as the sun and planets saw,/ From their bright thrones, the moment of thy birth,/ Such is thy Destiny: and by that Law/ Thou must go on --and on-- upon the earth./

undertaking of a subject, is subjective. For the usual, modern exegesis in its different manner of manifestation, the possibility is offered in its method to rise above this primitive subjectivism. Of course it runs into a new subjectivism through its method, since the method is only the manner of observation stemming from the fundamental interpretation of human existence. Whoever stands with others together in the area of a certain interpretation of human existence and has therefore a certain method at his disposal, is able "objectively" to interpret --for that area. Whoever disregards however such a connection to an established interpretation of human existence as available and observable, gives up a method and the claim to objective results of the interpretation. But he does not end in complete subjectivism, and to be sure, because he recognizes the claim, the authority of the text. For the only guarantee for the objectivity of exegesis, i. e., for the fact that the reality of history is expressed is precisely that the text influences the

Such must thou be; Thyself thou canst not fly;/ So still do Sibyls speak, have Prophets spoken./ The living stamp, received from Nature's die,/ No time can change, no art has ever broken. (Goethe and Schiller, Select Minor Poems, Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Co. 1939, p. 160).

exegete himself as reality. A presupposition is that in no sense does the exegete have at his disposal the possibilities of that which is spoken, viz., that which is intended, therefore that he gives up the opinion that with the aid of a method he is able to determine what historical actuality is. Briefly, the possibility of an "objective" exegesis is only guaranteed through the objectivity of history itself. And the latter is expressed only where the exegete is ready to let the text speak as authority. That does not mean, however, that he reflects history as a mirror, or that he photographs the picture of history, but that he stands in an existential vivacity. The naivete', with which for example the psychological exegesis tends to deny every factual claim of the text, shows clearly that the exegete is not inwardly alive, that his existence is not problematic for him. And therefore he can never succeed in pressing to that objectivity of history. On the contrary, whoever wants to hear the word of the text as word, acknowledges that the potentialities for human existence are not delineated from the beginning and not determined in the concrete situation by reason, character, psychical and historical conditions, but that they are open, that new possibilities become available in every concrete situation, and that human life is characterized by

the fact that it proceeds through decisions. Through the word which enters each situation anew, the exegete is placed into the decision and the word becomes for him an event. Therefore, event is not an objective word to be observed, but only for the existential, living hearer. The clearer it is that interpretation of history is at the same time self-interpretation, the clearer it is also that exegesis must be lead expressly away from the question of self-interpretation if it is not to fall into subjectivism.

IV

Before we follow this thought further, the statements should be illustrated with a few examples. H.J. Holtzmann (*Lehrbuch der Neutestamentl. Theologie*, 1911, I, p. 224) interprets Jesus' belief in God as an especially high level of development of mankind's faith in God. For Jesus God means the "representation of the potentiality (das Sein-sollende) as the power of love (Liebesmacht)." While the primitive image of God, namely what is based on the personification of the powers of nature, slowly disappears behind the infinity of causal continuity, it increases in its "power of resistance and consistency" the more it assumes "an established position in the continuity of the

claims and needs of the personal spirit. And it becomes the indivisible co-efficient of the fulfillment of moral events in self-consciousness." Is it necessary to prove that here in a decadent idealism or rationalism the interpreter sees the actual existence of man in the intellectual self-consciousness of the spirit? Is this exegesis neutral or does it not rest fully on an alleged principle which has access to the potentialities of the text?

When Holtzmann (cf. above, II p. 164) defines the Pauline view of the sinlessness of the Christians as the formula of a "titanic idealism," he very naively puts his own idealistic interpretation of man on the text, as Holtzmann as well as other exegetes are able to define the sinlessness of which Paul speaks only as the actualization of an ideal (a conception entirely foreign to Paul) viz., as the direction to this ideal.

Naively, the essence (*Wesen*) of καίνη ἐντολή I John 2.8 is idealistically interpreted by Holtzmann as "new" needs and new tasks of love are constantly appearing." That the text itself gives the direction to understand the "new" in the sense of eschatology is not sensed, because from that interpretation of man, the insight into the

meaning of eschatology is shut off altogether.

Equally as idealistically, Holtzmann exegetes I John 3.14: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers."* as "Love is the evidence that man lives. Dead spirits know nothing about love. Their existence (Dasein) 'slinks feebly and slowly away' (Rothe), because it does not attain the height of true personal living. Whoever does not love...remains as one following vis inertiae, in death, in the grave of natural life." Characteristic is also Rothe's word, which Baumgarten quotes appropriately. "Only in the escape of the individual out of his narrow boundaries, in this giving of himself to others and the receiving of others into himself and thereby enriching and extending his own narrow being through the fulness of being of others in their giving of themselves to him does the individual become aware that he lives." Something else must be understood under love in the text than the unfolding of the spiritual life of personality, since the possibility of love which is indeed a new commandment is seen as connected to the reality of revelation.

*All biblical references have been made to conform to the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. (New York: Nelson 1953).

In the Göttinger Bibelwerk Baumgarten states the content of I John 1.1-4 abstractly. He means however, it increases in perspicuity when one notices that it is submerged in a full, warm feeling. He counts on the readers, who are open to the feeling with which a text is presented, to be filled with "a warm feeling," which apparently is the motive for turning towards history. For I John 1.10 ("If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."), to define the word according to the idea of revelation is emphatically refused. It is, on the contrary, to be understood out of feeling. "In feeling, the need to accuse most provokingly those who believe themselves to have sat in the secret council of God dominates..."

Especially characteristic, however, is Baumgarten's exegesis of I John 2.9: "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still." It is not granted that every lack of love is real hate. Surely the author does not mean to say that seriously. There are in "real life" so many transitions and intermediates shades! Correspondingly, it is said about 3.14, one could also behave indifferently towards his brother. Of course! If man is seen only as a psychical subject, if love and hate

are understood as psychical phenomena only, then no Either-Or is valid for the behavior of man, but only transitions and nuances. However, the text speaks perhaps about one other reality than that "real life" which the exegete has in mind, from a reality which Bengel recognized in his laconic exegesis: "ubi non est amor, odium est.³ Cor non est vacuum."^{*} He speaks of love and hate not as of the state of a psychical subject which meet each other through all possible intermediate levels in the arena of neutrality, but of love and hate as existential possibilities for which there is only an Either-Or.

Windisch's exegesis of I John stands also in the psychological interpretation of man. Therefore 3.9 is exegeted: The "ideal state" of sinlessness of the Christian is gotten from the divine procreation as "a once and for all, however later effectual event." I John 3.14 is exegeted so: "Through conversion we are lead to life and to love." I John 4.20 is exegeted as a "psychological establishing" of the commandment of love.

³Schleier knows that also for example: Ueber Ressentiment und moral. Werturteil, 1912, p. 25.

*"Where there is not love, there is hate. The heart is not a vacuum."

Baumgarten's exegesis of I John may again serve for the romantic exegesis which asks about form (Gestalt) and personality. He interprets 1.1-4 such that he reduces the historical reality of the Saviour (under which he apparently is able only to understand the historical ascertainability) to the "character" of Jesus. But that is a diminishing tendency among all the attempts to see Jesus as a personality. In any case, it asks about something which is generally insignificant for the existential man (at least for the persons of the New Testament). He is not interested in his personality, but in the problem of his existence, i. e., in the question about the truth of his problem. The recollection that even Socrates and Caesar, Hildebrand and Dante, Goethe and Napoleon are forms (Gestalten), characters or personalities should draw attention to the fact that here in any case, one is not asking about what is intended in the New Testament. In fact, the question about form (Gestalt) and personality arises out of the same objectivity, from the same standpoint of the observer, as the questions of the idealistic or psychological exegesis. Man is seen from the outside, as a work of art, and his existence is not perceived as being at stake in the concrete moments of the

Here and Now, as given over to temporality with its moments of decision.

Why do I not employ counter-examples to these examples of an exegesis which does not grasp the reality of history? Because the exegesis moved by the question of existence exists precisely only in the vitality of its execution. Therefore, no example can be employed which could show "it is done in that manner." And also it cannot be claimed that the exegesis done by me is initiated by the question of existence. For the insight into the fact that it has to be so does not guarantee that it really is so. And the guarantee that the reality of history is expressed in an exegesis can always be given only through the reality of history itself, no criterion is at our disposal to say when that is the case. We are stuck in this situation, and the goal of our consideration can never be to attain a discretionary right to history, but only entirely to elucidate our situation for ourselves.

V

If, therefore, we take up the question again about the field in which that which is intended in the text lies and

about its accessibility to the exegete, then it has become clear that we are asking about the potentialities for our existence which grow out of our confrontation with history. It has also become clear that we must not expect an answer to this question as a presupposition by which the text would be investigated, because then we would have already at our disposal the possibilities of our existence, about which the text is first supposed to tell us. We dismiss every exegesis which views the possibilities of human existence as closed and observable and which maintains that the only possible position is that we possess the consciousness of the problematics of our existence. The problem by which a text is interpreted may be formulated concretely as follows. We are seeking to understand in what respect the text is the interpretation of its writer from the latter's interpretation of his existence as the actual potentiality of existing. We would seek with this question elucidation over our own existential potentiality. We stand over against the text similarly as to the men with whom we stand in life relationships, in which we attain an existence in the first place, namely, in the relationships of the I and Thou. It is then clear, that there can be no reconstruction of actual history,

just as the relation of the I to the Thou, of friend to friend, of husband to wife, of father to child is hardly reconstructible. And yet our actual existence does take place in these relationships. In them we are! And as these relationships are occurrences in time for us, and to be sure, such that bear the character of decision, so then the existential confrontation is actualized in moments of time which demand our decision.

That would mean that we would have to give up the idea of development where it becomes a question of the actual understanding of history, because it presupposes that the potentialities for man are observable and at man's disposal, because we can only speak of development where we have with our insight the developing subject at our disposal, where we know the man and his possibilities. Of course, this is not "knowing" in the quantitative sense, but as we know a line when we know two of its points. The idea of development is the expression of an ability of disposal (Verfügenkönnen) over history, and its sign is the idea of reconstructibility. Just as the observation of history under the idea of development is that which eliminates temporality from history, i. e., which is however the really human way to exist, --of course

not the measureable or so-called time. But precisely the latter is not the real time, but it is suitable for chronology as a pattern for the relations, whose connection, the idea of development will elucidate, while the really temporal event has become insignificant. For example, it would be inconsequential for time, with which the development of ideas calculates, how fast or how slowly time passes, and the entire continuity of relations could just as well be pressed into one moment, as thought of as stretched out into infinity. For an intellectual who could overlook the entire connection of relations, time would not be there at all. It could register the entire event also in another system of order as that of time. Correspondingly, the observation is timeless precisely for such an observer of history, while the existential confrontation with it is a temporal event in which the word of the text retains its character of temporality.

By all events, this event would be a free deed, insofar as our existence is actualized in our action as our actual possibility to live. This is, of course, not as if one felt oneself obligated to an action on the grounds of an interpreted text; on the contrary, the understanding itself is the action. As a free action, it stands outside of my dis-

posal and is actualized only in the decision, so that I do not stand parallel to it and at the same time am able to control it. It cannot be made the principle of a method, but grows as decision out of the question raised in the text, and if it is considered such a decision provoked through history, it is obedience in face of the authority of history.

This, knowing about the insecurity of our existence, knowing that our existence is placed in our free act of decision, plus the attitude towards history which recognizes it as authority and sees it consequently moved out of the distance of the observer into the presence of decision, this would be the presupposition of every exegesis. But before one asks what is peculiar to the exegesis of the New Testament or to a theological exegesis, it must be emphasized again that it is not a question of the proclamation of a new method. The question, how competent the method is for the actual understanding of a text, how far each concrete work of exegesis must always be methodical, is emphatically placed in the background. Firstly, it is important to see that a method does not understand real history because it always only understands that which basically stands at our disposal. This becomes clearer when one remembers that an interpretation should, as a rule, also be the conveying of the text onto a

third party, who (in his existential being) does not stand at my disposal.

Therefore, definite results cannot be earned with the postulated exegesis, as I have already said, which would then only serve to eliminate history because they have lost the character of temporality and hinder the third party from a existential confrontation with history. The results of an exegesis stemming from an existential situation cannot be justified in the same sense and established as that of a methodical exegesis. The possibilities of understanding the text may be limited just as much afterward as before. On the contrary, they are as inexhaustible as the possibilities which grow out of the confrontation of the I and Thou.

VI

The preceding discussion stems from the fact that it is our concern to ask of ourselves the question about our existence, and as inquisitive people, to confront the reality of history. But that is an abstract situation which does not exist in reality, since we do not stand at any point outside of history and at the same time are able to enter it for the first time. And yet, this situation is the point of departure of all secular exegeses, insofar as they under-

stand themselves.

In how far and in what manner then this mobility is present through the question of existence in the various fields of secular science of history, as the history of nations, of literature, of art, of mathematics, and how it acts in the concrete account of history, I do not see as my task that of analyzing all that.⁴ In general one may say that the in-

X

⁴I call attention to Dilthey's endeavor on the meaning of historical interpretation and at the same time, how his thoughts are especially still dominant in contemporary literary science. An example is H. Unger's treatise "Literaturgeschichte als Problemgeschichte" (Schriften der Königl. Gel. Ges. I geisteswiss. Kl. 1, 1924). In accord with Dilthey, he conceives of literature as a definition of life, so that literary history becomes for him a history of problems, whereby then "problem" is not intended as a rationalistic conception, but as an existential conception, so that the history of problems does not become a dialectical movement of formal aesthetical conceptions, but a "phenomenology of the problems of life." The "enigmatical questions and the questions of fate of existence" (as nature and spirit, love and death) constitute the content of literature, and consequently, also the object of literary history. The latter is, therefore, not possible at all without a conscious attitude towards the facts themselves, and it has to seek the connection to philosophy, in contrast to the old historical, philological method. With this opportunity it must be called to mind also that none other than Albert Eichhorn knew that an historian is only whoever understands the present (H. Gressmann, Albert Eichhorn und die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, 1924, p. 8); as he lectured over the main conceptions of theology (sin, belief, incarnation) (cf. above p. 13) and aimed in his treatise on the doctrine of justification of the apologia (1887) at an understanding of the events of the life in faith itself. (p. 10).

terest in a certain area of history, provided that the work is not mere busy work, is founded in a conscious or unconscious choice to elucidate human existence under its diverse possibilities, and that if this choice has grown out of an existential vitality, this vitality will act continually in the historical work, and to be sure, insofar as the perceptions in all these areas are not understood and accumulated as externally observed material, but as they lead to the understanding of our existence, initiated through the question of truth. In this area learning is under the question of truth, and consequently, every step of perception takes place under the presupposition of the readiness to a radical abandoning of previously known things, thus on the basis of a radical condition devoid of presuppositions.

A philosophical exegesis ultimately will question history not about single elements of knowledge in an area, but will be guided from the beginning emphatically by the question concerning the potentialities of human existence, and to be sure, precisely by the presupposition that man, of himself, can ask the question of existence and possesses the potentiality of the free act in which he attains his existence.

VII

The uniqueness in the case of New Testament exegesis is that it can remain in the circle of secular exegesis, but that the claim of the New Testament stands over against it, that man is not in control of his existence so much so, that he is able of his own accord to ask the question about existence and possesses the potentiality for the free act. This exists only for faith. The decisive question for the understanding of the New Testament would be then, whether the demand of faith is recognized or not. But in that case, the situation of the exegete would be characterized as entirely impossible. For not only is the possibility of this decision denied him, the New Testament even claims that he is not able by himself to know at all what faith is, since this knowing can first be the result of the believing exegete. And the questioning itself, if it is to be a correct questioning, must be a questioning in faith.

Would the readiness to questioning in faith have to be presupposed by the exegete? That is, however, apparently meaningless and would demand a stepping out of one's own shadow. It is seen that the entire reflection cannot be actualized if it possesses a character based on principles,

i. e., if it sees the exegesis in that unreal, abstract situation in which the secular exegete wants to stand, if it ignores his concrete situation. The latter is, however, the case that the exegesis of the New Testament becomes a task for him who stands in the tradition of the Church of the Word. Only if this means -- not that I stand as an historical individual viewed objectively, but that I stand with my existence in the tradition of the Word, --is there such a readiness of questioning in faith.

As minimal as there is therefore a method of theological exegesis, there is thus just as minimal a possibility to justify a theological exegesis of the New Testament "on principle". The correct questioning of the text can only be a believing one, i. e., one grounded in obedience towards the authority of the Bible. Just as Paul promoted the faith as ὑπακοή without needing to legitimize the authority of the word, as by John the μαρτυρία is not a legitimization for the word paralleling the latter, but is precisely the word itself, so there is apparently only one matter-exegesis of the New Testament, which proceeds out of obedience. έάν τις θέλη τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν, γνώσεται περὶ τῆς διδαχῆς, πότερον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστιν ή ἐγὼ ἀπ'

Ἐμαυτοῦ λαλῶ. (John 7.17).* The fact of this obedience is the presupposition of the exegesis, and I do not have this fact at my disposal since it is a free fact, thus not subjected to my objective consideration, but it is real only in the being done, and because -- what comes out the same -- I am not placed before the decision of this fact in an abstract situation, but in the concrete situation in which the entirety of my existence is brought together and is at stake.

A theological exegesis would thus be such for which faith would be the presupposition, but even then it can only be done, knowingly dared. It cannot be founded and justified, because we do not lay claim to the presupposition. The question is, therefore, answered, whether one has to interpret perhaps also Augustine, Luther or Schleiermacher or even the Bhagavadgita as the New Testament. If I reflect 'on principle', view myself in an abstract, traditionless situation, there is no difference here. Whether, however, in the case of such an interpretation faithful hearing becomes event, does not exactly matter 'on principle'.

Consequently, the exegesis is in the same position as the-

* "If any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is of God or whether I am speaking on my own authority."

ology which also is meaningful only under the presupposition of faith, and which does not have claim to this presupposition, which however must be done. For to renounce theology would mean also to renounce faith and would prove that the meaning of revelation as justification of the sinner is incomprehensible, because theology means the comprehensible presentation of the existence of man as one determined by God. However, because it lays claim neither to God nor to the existential man, it can never be a speaking of God, but only a speaking about God and about man. And it is able to prove its validity only through the fact that it constantly calls attention to the fact that such a speaking is a speaking of the sinner which does not claim to be a speaking of God at all, and which can be justified exactly in the perception of this limitation, since God wants to justify the sinner. But this recollection does not mean the reference to an available presupposition or an hypothesis of scientific endeavor. On the contrary, it means the reference to the revelation which can only be real in the deed. A renunciation of theology would therefore be a renunciation of faith, because it would not recognize the meaning of justification for the concrete man with his undertakings -- thus

in this case the undertaking of theology -- and would reject with scorn the promise for him and his work. That would mean pecca fortiter.⁵

Because exegesis is not to be separated from self-interpretation and because this becomes explicit in the exegesis of the New Testament, and because, on the other hand, the self-interpretation of man as a historical individual is able to actualize itself only in the interpretation of history, theology and exegesis or systematics and historical theology basically coincide. The latter cannot make its task "critical interpretation on the ground of faith" and systematic development of its assertions from an available fact.⁶ On the other hand, Biblical theology would be, according to that which is spoken, not the establishing of a complex of historical statements, viz., of phenomena or of the consciousness of the New Testament writers. On the contrary, the existential confrontation with the reality of this history

⁵ I have more thoroughly presented this in the essay "Welchen Sinn hat es, von Gott zu reden?" ThBl IV (1925) no. 6. (Engl.: "What Sense has it to speak of God?" in Essays, Philosophical and Theological, New York, 1955).

⁶ cf. Gogarten, ZZ III (1925) Heft 1, p. 78.

is actualized here. Of course, a separation of the systematical and the historical endeavors is essential in the actual work, so that the reference of both, one to the other, is experienced always anew. Systematic theology would have to make the comprehensible explication of the existence of man determined by God its central theme, whereas for historical theology, this could only be indirectly its theme. It only has to present directly what interpretation of man is given in the text, and to be sure, in such a manner that it brings this interpretation from the comprehensibleness of the past into the comprehensibleness of the present.

Thus in any case, theology is a scientific undertaking, since it is the task of abstract thinking. And its scientific character does not suffer a loss as a result, because it is clear about the fact that the contents raised to a level of understanding are not of a rational origin. Its dubious situation is, in view of its theme pertaining to the existence of man, only that much clearer than for all other sciences of history which finally also find themselves in a dubious situation, since the task nowhere is the undertaking of an abstract man.

On the other hand, theology cannot make the claim that

it is directly a proclamation of the Word. For as a scientific effort it always only makes statements of relative validity, while the proclamation of the Word only has meaning when its statements make a claim to something definite for the concrete situation. (And other than for the concrete situation, there is no proclamation of the Word.) The mobility which grows out of this, that a statement of faith is not an universal, timeless truth, but is real only in the act in which revelation becomes event, is common to both. But the conceptual task of theology, even of exegetical theology, also cannot be valid in the concrete moment as closed, but has the characteristic that it must become better and better, what would be meaningless to demand in the same sense from the proclamation of the Word, if the latter really is what it should be. The Church has to demand an always better theology, but not an always better proclamation of the Word, but only a proclamation of the Word at all.

If for exegetical theology, the task of abstract thinking, the New Testament is only indirectly, and never directly the Word of God, then its main theme can be fully formulated correctly as "New Testament theology" in relation to the theological tradition. Then it becomes a serious thing

to say that God's Word is a hidden word spoken to men, that revelation proclaimed in the Bible is a hidden revelation.

A speaking confronts us in the Bible that offers itself as a speaking about God and about man, because it is spoken in the human sphere. As there is no direct confrontation between the I and Thou, but only the confrontation veiled in the Word with its character, its expression to be for something, so there is no direct revelation, but only the revelation veiled in the human word. Just as this fact establishes the necessity of an exegetical theology to elevate the assertion of the text into the abstractness of the present, so the necessity of a Sachkritik which exists for every exegesis increases. We have already spoken (p. 56) about its establishment and its ambiguity. It becomes clear anew here; for it has to be established by the raising of the assertions of the text into the conception (Begrifflichkeit) of the present just how far the matter which is being questioned in the text has found an equivalent expression in that which is spoken.

Barth⁷ is correct that the criticism must avoid the misunderstanding, as if it meant, the πνεῦμα χριστοῦ stands

⁷Preface to the third edition of the Epistle to the Romans, 1923, p. XXI.

competitively beside other spirits in the text. But it must be seriously considered that in the text, as in the assertions of man, the πνεῦμα χριστοῦ is not to be observed directly at all, and that sofar as Paul speaks about the "matter," he represents the point of view as a human speaker, which one can compare not only with other points of view, but from which one is also able to ask whether he himself has always held to it faithfully. If one intends to do theological exegesis as a science at all, then one must not let oneself be shocked by the question, "At which place could one put his finger with the claim that exactly there the πνεῦμα χριστοῦ is expressed?" In fact, one has to make such a differentiation. And that question can always remind one of the peculiar situation of the exegete who is motivated by the question of existence and knows consequently that he lays no claim to a criterion definitively to grasp the reality of history. (p. 73, 78). He cannot for that reason refuse certain assertions. He cannot make the character of the text as the Word of God an available presupposition of exegesis. That obligation towards the Sachkritik is truly for him no occasion for boasting, but is the constant reminder of the obligation for self-criticism, and to be sure, in the exis-

tential sense.

The Sachkritik must not allow itself to be confused by the question whether a pericope in the text, but which is critically objected to, because it stands within the New Testament canon, could become a word of revelation. Suppose the critical objection were correct, then that could be the case, if the particular passage were interpreted according to another passage, thus for example, through allegories (which to be sure could be justified through their content but never as a method). But one must not count on this possibility. On the contrary! Just as the idea of the canon intends to secure the character of contingency of revelation and wards off misunderstanding, as if it were a question in revelation of generally elucidating truths or of the faith of especially faithful individuals, so it must be seen through criticism that the idea of revelation does not become the available presupposition for exegesis, as if the demand of the existential confrontation with reality, about which the text speaks, were lifted up as the (unavailable!) presupposition for the understanding of the text.

Because there is no direct confrontation with God, but because His revelation is veiled in the Word, there can be

for exegesis also no call of an inner light, there can be no "pneumatic" exegesis, which relies on the pneuma as a pre-supposed possession of the exegete. A pneuma which would be at our disposal without connection to the Word, does not exist for us. Exegesis may only proceed from the interpretation of the Word. Since the task of exegesis is abstract, and since the word of the text is never the fact itself, but is an expression for the matter, the matter itself becomes accessible to the exegete if he understands the Word. The understanding of the Word is, of course, burdened with the entire ambiguity which arises through the fact that words are not only the once and for all expression for the Here and Now of the concrete situation, and to be sure, that they can only be the former if they are the latter. The exegete has to know the entire history of the words of the text thoroughly, without deceiving himself that he has captured the meaning of a word in the concrete Here and Now. Thereby, the entire historical, philological work on the New Testament is justified, indeed, furthered, which attains its special character in that the New Testament is written in Greek. One could pointedly say that this effort terminates in the production of a lexicon. However, since the words of

speech have no fixed meaning as a label, but are determined just as much through the self-development of the word from its origin as through its history and the wider and more narrow connection in which it enters, this lexicon could not be a reference book for students. On the contrary, the task of the grammar, as of the entire abstract and religionsgeschichtlich exploration, is included in it.

Since the words of a text can only be understood in their place in a reciprocal understanding of the matter which is being spoken about, then the work cannot be so set about that the historical, philological investigation yields as a precondition a historical exegesis which the matter exegesis would have its exegesis follow, so that after all Niebergall did preserve the word in the fifth volume,⁸ to concur with Barth. It would be misleading also to say that the historical and the theological exegesis takes place in different spheres.⁹ On the contrary, it is to be emphasized that the separation of the historical and the theological exegesis is an unsustainable condition for

⁸Preface to the second edition of the Epistle to the Romans, 1922, p. 9.

⁹K. Barth, Die Auferstehung der Toten, 1924, p. V.

both, and may not rightly afterwards force upon the historical, philological commentaries a theological condition. In the actual event of the exegesis, the historical and the theological exegesis stand in a non-analyzable relationship, because the true historical exegesis rests on the existential confrontation with history, and thus concides with the theological exegesis, even if the justification of the latter rests precisely on the same fact. And indeed, that existential confrontation is not something which could be done as an undertaking and as such would assume its place in or behind the methodical philological, historical exegesis.

The Problem of "dialectical" Theology:
A Discussion with Peterson

If Socrates intended to find truth in the διαλέγεσθαι , it was because he proceeded from the observation that the individual in his empirical situation does not have truth at his command, but that truth is revealed in ordinary discourse, in conversation, because the individual has no criterion for true and false. However if it happens in conversation that one is brought over to an opinion or is convinced by the argument of the other person, then a criterion is established in that fact. In continuous conversation, in questioning and answering, in testing and convincing, truth must therefore become more and more evident. Therein in the conviction that, in an obscure manner, truth was already present in the discourse from the beginning, that in some degree every discourse as such participates in truth. Therein lies still another fact, that even in further discourses, truth will always be present only in a certain obscurity, for questioning and answering always continue. Consequently, perceiving attains those presuppositions always only stepwise, on the basis of which its assertions made at that moment have validity. It becomes necessary then to search for more and more deeply imbedded presuppositions, in order

finally to arrive at the presupposition which itself does not need any other.

This process is endless, and yet it is meaningful, because the $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\varepsilon\iota\alpha$ is the endless goal, not as something which could ever become a given condition (even if in the infinite) but it is contained immanently in the entire process of discourse of thinking. It is the "invisible middle" ever present between two assertions. Only it must never be forgotten that the entire process of perceiving is a dialectical process, a discourse, in which no assertion taken by itself may claim to be absolute truth, but is always only true in the relationship to that middle, and that this relationship is guaranteed in the fact that every sentence is brought together with its opposite, that it is essential that each sentence finds its opposite. The truth which here is perceived to be ever present is therefore never the reality but always only the potentiality. Moreover, it is seen that for the conception of this $\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\gamma\varepsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ two or more real persons are not required, but that thinking as such is a $\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\gamma\varepsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ which could take place equally as well as a monologue of a single individual. The duality of $\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\gamma\mu\varepsilon\nu\iota$ has only the significance of guaranteeing the dialectical

character of discourse (of thinking) as such.

In this discussion it is also significant that the question is the answer and visa versa. For if the immanent motion of the $\lambda\delta\gamma\circ\varsigma$ is carried out in the exchange of question and answer, then every question must initiate motion of a progressive thought process as an answer, insofar as it, as a single $\lambda\delta\gamma\circ\varsigma$, participates in the $\lambda\delta\gamma\circ\varsigma$ of the whole. A question does not contain therefore a non-essential but an essential answer. The answer is determined by the question, just as the question was determined by the answer of an earlier step, and the new answer must release a new question. Then basically, that reference to a presupposition (and in the end to the presupposition) is a supposition of the presupposition itself which takes place with discourse as such, inasmuch as every $\lambda\delta\gamma\circ\varsigma$ participates in the entire $\lambda\delta\gamma\circ\varsigma$. Consequently, it is not a question of the accidental supposition of a "working hypothesis" of any thinking individual, but of the presupposition immanently established with every discourse which makes the claim to truth.

If truth then is also never reality, the presence (Dahaben) of a fact (Gegebenheit), so it is basically only the law of perceiving itself, i. e., in perceiving the perceiver

grasps nothing more than the perceiving itself. And if the opinion is then reached that one in such perceiving grasps the essence (Wesen) of things and of his own existence, it may be shown that one sees the being (Sein) of objects and of himself none other than in the λόγοι. In all "seriousness" one cannot speak of another "existing self" (Seienden); for everything as object-encounter (Objekt Begegnendes) awaits resolution in the λόγοι, reduction into λόγοι. If one speaks about God, then this speaking has no "seriousness" if one is disillusioned that here God cannot mean anything other than that first presupposition of all thought which, at the same time as that presupposition, is the epitome of the legality (Gesetzlichkeit) of all thinking. But also where one is free of that illusion, it is true that to speak about God in that manner means in fact not to speak about God, -be this discourse ever so serious in all other respects.

Is then, as Peterson reproaches us and also as many others believe, the discourse of "dialectical" theology such a discourse about God which would be in no sense "serious", since it could then disillusion itself over its own perception?

Also in "dialectical" theology it is a question of a dis-

cussion on the ground of the presupposition that the single declaration does not lay claim to the truth, has no universal validity, but that it procures its meaning only in connection with an opposing declaration on the basis of the relationship of both declarations to an invisible middle. Also one speaks in "dialectical" theology of the fact that the question is the answer and the answer the question. But it becomes immediately obvious that it is a question of something fundamentally different, despite all formal similarity, so that one has to ask the question if it is really justifiable to speak of "dialectical" theology. Yet that is finally inconsequential if only the meaning is not misunderstood.

It is however clear, that the words 'the question is the answer' and visa versa are used by us dialecticians only in reference to a single determinative question, the decisive question which is man himself in his existence. And the answer is likewise a single, determinative one: the justification of the sinner by God. The answer probably becomes again immediately a question when it is grasped by man, when it is understood as an assertion separated from the real event defined by it. But then it does not become a new ques-

tion, but the old. Therefore it is not question of a progressive thought process, but of a dwelling on one point, of a circle around one central point, if you will. Each attempt "to progress" would be punished, so that the would be progressive individual sees himself hurled back onto the old question.

The question is not raised by man at all, and equally as little is the answer determined by the questioning of man. For as long as man questions, the answer is not the question. (Barth, Ges. Vortr., p. 161). It is only when God has questioned, i. e., but under question is the real man in his momentariness, not the abstract man; because man does not lay claim to his existence (he stands indeed not beside it, but in it; he lives it; he is it in its course), he perceives the question under which he stands (namely that he is a sinner), only when God reveals it to him. However when God reveals it to him, the question is the answer, and to be sure, not as if the question is put aside or "repealed", i. e., understood in the wider process of perceiving as a step towards the answer, but the answer must be the question, (Barth, Ges. Vortr. p. 167), i. e., the sinner is the one justified.

Therefore the being (Sein) of the answer, which is the

question, is not a being constituted through the stimulus of the λόγος or founded in the λόγος, but is the real being in the existential (existentiel) concreteness of man, whose being here has not taken place in the λόγοι, but in his historical reality, the time expiring between his birth and death. Truth, which here is the issue, is not an abstract potentiality, but concrete reality. As the question in which we stand is our existential situation (whether we know it or not), and is neither our subjective questioning nor a station in the movement of the thought process, so the answer is also only real as spoken by God, as that event which establishes our existence anew. (Barth, Ges. Vortr., p. 165). And in this opinion, we are entirely one with Peterson. "'The divine secret' is present before it can be actualized by the human spirit, before faith has the power to draw near to it, before the human will is able to unite itself with it." (ZZ, 1925, p. 284).

It is an eternal event, insofar as it never creates a status (neither in the empirical history of humanity nor in the history of the individual), which would be a spiritual or psychical fact, but on the contrary becomes again and again new through the wonder of the Holy Spirit; that it is an eter-

nal event which would not be comprehended as the eternal motion of the λόγος , but which is only real, if it occurs through God and becomes an event in our temporality, precisely through the wonder of the Holy Spirit. However, even this conception of the eternal event allows the dialectical process (in order not to say 'method'!) to appear as the adapted way of theological speech. For by my speaking of this eternal event as if it paused even for a moment for observation and pin-pointing in the declaration, I have already falsified it; and only the invariable proviso that it was not thus intended is able to acknowledge the truth of my declaration. And this proviso on the other hand becomes practical, as I bring to the assertion its opposite assertion. And how that appears, is shown by Barth (Ges. Vortr., p. 172), as far as one is able to "demonstrate" that, because basically one is not able to do it, because one is not able to demonstrate anything in abstracto at all. Conversation is namely not fiction, but is always a question of that which is spoken by and to the real man in thesis and antithesis, so that conversely, the monologue form of theological development is fiction.

This "dialectics" is then nothing less than a discourse which, as such, determines its presupposition. Exactly this

is what the theological dialectician does not have the power to do, (Barth, Ges. Vortr., p. 174), i. e., he is not able at all to give his speaking meaning and truth (= reality!), because he does not have access to the presupposition. His discourse is therefore only a testimony of the truth of God which lies "in the middle." (Barth, Ges. Vortr., p. 173). This truth is indeed the event originating from God, God's deed, i. e., neither presupposed by the speaker as the immanent rule of thought which gives every declaration its significance, nor presented as the completed perception at the end of an endless path of all διαλέγεσθαι. On the contrary, it is the continuous occurrence (the event in time), to which he refers, to which he points.. And his speaking does not become a process in infinitum by that fact that he always would have to proclaim something new, true about God, but in the fact that he must secure immediately the reference to the occurrence against the tendency in which the reference to an objectively provable fact of the history of mankind or psychical history is misunderstood, because it is an eternal occurrence!

The "seriousness" of the "dialectics" exists, then, exactly in the fact that discourse is observed as the singu-

larly determinative speech-form guaranteeing that the subject under discussion is God. In that it does not deceive itself in wanting to attain the seriousness of God (Peterson, Was ist Theologie, p. 7), it gives God glory. God is neither a dialectical potentiality; nor is the issue here about "God" or about "man" at all, but about the revealed God and about the concrete man, i. e., of course, not about the empirical man (about his experiences or such), but about the existential man who does not exist in the abstract but only in his reality.¹ The answer to the question, 'what is theology?' resounds therefore at first (cf. Peterson, Was ist Th., p. 5), that there is theology in the fact that one speaks of the revelation of God as an eternal event, however an event; that there is, of course, no theology which speaks in place of God, that is, which pretends to attain the seriousness of God.

Basically however, the difference between Peterson and ourselves does not become apparent in this definition, because insofar as Peterson carries on a controversy against us

¹Moreover, what does "empirical" mean? The "empirical" man is also only an individual seen in a certain method of observation, namely, one understood in the future as conceived by himself, i. e., the man seen as an object of nature, not the real man with whom we are related from the very beginning in common being. The empirical man is therefore an abstraction.

here, his polemic is based on a wide-spread misunderstanding. Therefore all of the previous argument is directed towards our other opponents rather than against Peterson. Our actual difference, however, lies in the following. If the διαλέγεσθαι of theology points to an event (issuing from God) as its presupposition, then there exists the fact that the object of theology, if one is to speak about God in it, does not permit a διαλέγεσθαι (so far afield we go as dialecticians!). On the contrary, the only determinative way to speak of Him is the Good News, the proclamation. But precisely this fact, i. e., its direct connection with the proclamation (as its presupposition, not its result!), "dialectical" theology is aware of, and in this fact we differ from Peterson. For he does not establish his theological (dogmatic) conceptions from the character of their objects evolving out of the experiences, and he loses, consequently, the direct relationship of theology with the proclamation. On the contrary, he establishes his connection of theology from the "order of being" (Seinsordnung) (cf. ZZ, 1925, p. 290) through the help of a so-called view of existence (Wesenschau). How that occurs, his essay on the "Song of Praise of the Angels" shows the clearest. (ZZ, 1925, p. 141 - 153). Here he describes first the

"higher form of being" of the mystic from the viewpoint of the mystic. The mystic is then actually the object of observation, and the observation is basically an historical one. Suddenly however, the viewpoint is exchanged underhandedly with that of the view of existence, and mysticism is seen as the object, and it is equated as a real manner of being simply with that intended by the mystic.²

In this manner realities are constantly exhausted by Peterson which truthfully are only conceptions of a temporarily determining, historical interpretation of being, and which, in that they are present, have not proven their validity and significance. Therefore truth and being lie basically in the sphere of the λόγοι for him, and not, as he accuses us, for us. For he sets up his realities out of the λόγοι alone. If then it is inherent to these realities that they possess auctoritas according to which position they assume in revelation, then it is not understandable how, by this path of the view of existence, it is possible to come to an understanding of an auctoritas, and also how the auctoritas can be something other than something which one

²cf. H. Schlier, ZZ 1925, p. 410, par. 1.

is able to perceive through these substantiated realities. I am able to speak of the auctoritas of a being seriously only when this auctoritas is not something on him but is his being, and when it is for me. Consequently, the debate between us would have to be conducted entirely differently (and hopefully it still will be).

It would have to be continued from the question about the conceptions of being (*Seinsbegriffen*)³ and about the possibility of establishing authentic conceptions. In the polemic against inauthentic theological conceptions, against rationalism, psychologism and historicism (thus for example, also against Althaus), we agree with him entirely. The method of his attack against us and his specific accusations have resulted that our actual difference here is only indirectly or occasionally apparent. Yet we must defend ourselves against his accusations.

"Dialectical" theology receives its "seriousness" in that it takes very seriously the inequality of its declaration with that of the divine declaration, ultimately its unseriousness, as of all theology. This last unseriousness

³cf. H. Schlier, ZZ 1925, p. 410 - 414.

means that that declaration --be it ever so earnest-- about God stands in fact under the proviso of the seriousness of God which alone is really serious, as He stands manifested in the Final Judgment. (Peterson, Was ist Th., p. 7). "Dialectical" theology expresses this proviso. Under this proviso alone would Peterson's declaration be correct, even if it is a statical declaration which does not express this proviso. One may ask of course, why one may not speak of God also in a statical, non-dialectical manner, in that manner therefore, as the discourse of dogma proceeds, according to Peterson. The answer would be that this may indeed happen and must perhaps also happen, but only under the one condition, that the existence of that eternal proviso resting in the divinity of God and in the humanity of man is so self-evident to him who speaks in this fashion (and be it also the Church!), it would not need to be especially expressed at all.

But that is not the case for Peterson. He believes that he has the complete seriousness of God present in his dogmatic discourse, which indeed is no longer a "discourse" but is a "declaration." He possesses this seriousness because the discourse which he here intends is not his discourse, but that of the Church which is nothing other than the

extension of the awesome, eternal seriousness of God in Christ into this age and world. "Dogma lies in the extension of the discourse of Christ about God, and therefore the authority of dogma is ... the authority of Christ which speaks here." (Peterson, *Was ist Th.*, p. 21f.). And to be sure, and this is the deciding factor, this extension is comprehended as a direct, unbroken real extension which by no means is established anew again and again through the wonder of God in the Holy Spirit, but it is perceived as a simple and non-dialectical continuity of revelatory history with church history. Here lies our essential difference.

Perhaps we could accept all the assertions of Peterson and discuss them, for as pointed out, we are united with him in the keen resistance against all psychologism and historicism, but yet only under the proviso that this continuity is broken through the proviso of the Holy Spirit, which means that God's seriousness remains really preserved for God Himself and can never be delegated once and for all to an earthly authority, be it even the Church.

Moreover, Kierkegaard was not disillusioned by the character and significance of the dialectical process. Precisely in the writing to which Peterson occasionally refers,

in Fear and Trembling* he states very clearly that the dialectician as dialectician does not succeed any further than the average and simplest man (p. 42). He perceived: "I am unable to make the movements of faith." (p. 44). "The last movement, the paradoxical movement of faith, I cannot make." (p. 74). "For my part I can well describe the movements of faith, but I cannot make them." (p. 51). In Fear and Trembling faith is defined clearly over against the resignation of melancholy. Also Kierkegaard was aware of what is seriousness and was of the opinion that the seriousness of the matter was preservable through dialectics. "The seriousness consists precisely in the fact that Christ cannot give direct communication." (Training in Christianity, p. 135).** Whoever permits Christ to speak directly transforms him humanly "into some sort of a public person as it were, almost as serious as the parson." (p. 135). "The beginning is made by refusing direct communication -- that is the real seriousness." (p. 140).

"All Christian knowledge, however strict its form, ought

*trans. W. Lowrie, Princeton: University Press 1945.

**trans. W. Lowrie, Princeton: University Press 1944.

to be anxiously concerned; but this concern is precisely the note of the edifying. Concern implies relationship to life, to the reality of personal existence, and thus in a Christian sense it is seriousness; the high aloofness of indifferent learning is from the Christian point of view, far from being seriousness, that is, from the Christian point of view, jest and vanity. But seriousness again is edifying." (The Sickness unto Death, p. 4).* "Speculation does not take heed of the fact that in relation to sin the ethical has its place... Sin is a characteristic of the individual... The seriousness of sin is its reality in the individual, whether it is thou or I. Speculatively one has to look away from the individual. So it is only frivolously one can talk speculatively about sin." (p. 196f.).

When God becomes man, "it is the seriousness of existence. And the seriousness in this seriousness is that everyone shall have an opinion about it." (p. 214). Whoever only experiments (and indeed the dialectician Peterson would do just that), "acknowledges no power over him", hence in the

*trans. W. Lowrie, Princeton: University Press 1941.

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last resort /he/ lacks seriousness and is able only to conjure up a show of seriousness when the self bestows upon its experiments its utmost attention." This is only affected seriousness, and consequently no seriousness, if it is still serious for him. Real seriousness lies only in the idea "that God is regarding one." (p. 110). "Only the God-relationship is earnest; the earnestness consists in forcing the task to its highest achievement because there is One who compels by the power of the eternal; the earnestness consists in the enthusiasm having power over itself and compulsion in itself." (p. 154). "Earnestness is a man's God-relationship. Everywhere where the thought of God is present in what a man does, thinks and says, there is earnestness, in that is there earnestness." (p. 258f.).

Thus seriousness is nothing other than the necessary actuality. The expression of the will to speak factually is dialectics, just as the relation to life at all is a dialectical one. "Life's seriousness consists in the will to be and to express perfection (ideality) in everyday reality, willing this in such a way that it may not turn out to one's own perdition, when once for all one busily cancels the whole thing, or presumptuously takes it in vain, regarding it as a

dream --what lack of seriousness in both cases!-- but humbly wills in reality." (Training in Christianity, p. 188, cf. also p. 216 for the dialectics of this seriousness.). "No one was ever earnest who had not learned from earnestness that one can also appear too earnest." (Works of Love, p. 275).* "For no thinker has such a grasp on life as has death, that powerful thinker, who cannot merely think through every illusion, but can think it in part and as a whole, can think it to nothingness." (p. 278).

If clarity concerning the meaning of theological "dialectics" is attained, then the argument with the one accusation of Peterson actually becomes self-evident. We agree with him that for the time between Christ's first and second coming the point of faith has replaced all dialectical questioning. (Peterson, Was ist Th., p. 8). For our "dialectical" proceeding does not intend at all to establish or to replace faith via dialectica, but is itself founded on faith and is the attempt to speak in keeping with faith. We agree with him that intrinsic to faith is obedience (op. cit.), and that therefore in theology concrete authority and concrete

*trans. D.F. Swenson, Princeton: University Press 1946.

obedience become known, that revelation is presupposed and active in it. (op. cit., p. 9). We recognize, as well as he and Kierkegaard, that the existence of the dialectician as such is not obedience, and we refrain from claiming it as such. We recognize, as well as he, that the obedience of faith is entirely non-dialectical.

However the determining question is: In what manner is revelation "presupposed" in theology? In what manner do concrete authority and concrete obedience become known? That revelation is neither a fact of an historical, empirical nature nor an hypothesis in the process of radical thinking, Peterson recognizes as well as we, and his theology intends, as does ours, to go beyond abstract revelation-, authority- and faith-conceptions. His own conception of revelation arises out of his understanding of the being of man, as a being which is assigned a certain position on the levels of forms of being (Seinsformen) of the cosmos and which has the potentiality to grasp the entire cosmic order of being through speculation, the potentiality even to raise his own form of being to a higher form, to approach the divine form of being. This latter possibility, as one has to interpret Peterson, is given through the facts of creation and revela-

tion. And revelation is --as man is a cosmic being-- a cosmic event which has taken place once and acts further in the form of a causal process (how else?). There can only be an awareness of revelation then in the form of speculation, within which the obedience of faith (Glaubensgehorsam) accepts the fact of revelation as given on the ground of some kind of authority.

Truthfully, it is not a question of concrete authority and concrete obedience here at all, because it is not a question of the concrete man. For the concrete man cannot be understood at all as an entity (Wesenheit) which has its place and thus its security in a cosmic order of being. The concrete man exists only in the given moment (Jeweiligkeit) of his temporal being, in his historicity, and consequently, in total insecurity. Because the temporality of his existence characterizes the latter as a situation always to be found in motion, he never has the potentiality of viewing himself as classified in an order of being. And of a revelation which would be a cosmic event he could not know anything at all. On the contrary, it does not concern him in the least. If the issue, according to our opinion, is about the real man when he is seen in the given moment (Jeweiligkeit)

of his temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*), and if revelation is the eternal event given from God which enters into our temporality, our history, then revelation as "presupposition" is only present in our theological discourse when it pleases God to create this presupposition, to allow it really to happen in the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Obedience is not something which can be calculated such as a fact at one's disposal. On the contrary, if obedience is present in our theology, God decides it. The authority which ought to become known in theology is not our authority, but the authority of God, i. e., however, it is not a direct authority at the disposal of the theologians, but is the authority of the Spirit, over whom we have no control. Or to put it in other words, the participation in the Logos, which according to Peterson (W. i. Th., p. 11) is presupposed in theology,⁴ is not a direct participation, but a participation by man in the Spirit of God, procured through the wonder of the Holy Spirit. We do not possess a theologia gloriae.

⁴Moreover, what does it mean that in theology it is presupposed that revelation, faith and obedience involve in some way a participation in the divine Logos. In what way then? That precisely is the issue!

All this does not mean (and again we are one with Peterson; for his statement on p. 29 that in contemporary theology faith is an attitude of the soul does not concern us) that the realistic character of theological perception, which is grounded in the real character of revelation, is forgotten or given up. It does mean however, that the real character of revelation does not raise the latter to a provable, objective fact, but that it is a question of a work of God which is not accomplished within any kind of cosmic order. Consequently, we refute, as does Peterson, the connection of dogmatics with idealistic philosophy, as well as the demand of a "system of Christian doctrine," and we are of the opinion with him that to speak of God's becoming man as a dialectical possibility is not to speak of it at all. (Was ist Th., p. 10). But we also refuse Peterson's orders of being and their relationships, thus basically a transposed empire which so little attains the concreteness of its objects as the natural science that of its objects.

Peterson is quite correct, of course, to complain that the actual meaning of revelation is paradoxical. (W. i. Th., p. 11 and 27). In fact, it is not a question in Christianity of one or more paradoxical statements. And one could ask if

it would not be better not to speak of 'paradox', because the term, as that of 'dialectics', is overloaded with philosophical usages of the language. Seriously however, there can be no doubt that, insofar as we do speak of a paradox, the paradoxical event is intended, namely, the event that God is gracious to the sinner. As a thesis that is not in the least paradoxical. On the contrary, it is the most obvious thing in the world. As an event however, it is the most incomprehensible thing.⁵ This therefore, that the statement (for only in the statement is it permissible to talk of the event!) of the grace of God can be spoken to the sinner as true, is the paradox.

To deny the paradox would again mean to maintain the direct, unbroken, objective continuity of the event of revelation, and thus not to think of the fact that Christ is ascended into heaven and has sent the Spirit. (For Christ's

⁵Therefore, we do not know at all why Peterson accuses us (W. i. Th., p. 27) that the stoic paradox, 'the king alone is the wiseman', is to be sure a paradoxical statement, but not the statement that the cross of Christ is an abomination to the Jews and a laughing stock to the Greeks; and therefore not, because the cross of Christ itself is not a statement. We emphasize this precisely and because we know that we and also Peterson can express that only in the form of a sentence, we speak "dialectically."

ascension would be at best a highly superficial miracle, if there were a direct continuity of revelation.) "Non-paradoxical" would mean, not to disavow faith (for Peterson defended himself rightly against speaking of a theology of faith) but to disavow the wondrous act of the Holy Spirit, who alone secures revelation as revelation (just as he first creates faith). It is in fact completely clear that there is no theology, if revelation does not "conceal a relative power of perception in itself," (W. i. Th., p. 11), if it (namely its content as declaration) is paradoxical. But no one of us maintains that! On the contrary, we agree with Peterson completely that if revelation is paradoxical, there can be no revelation, by which is to be understood: of the content of revelation is paradoxical. This is true in another sense, however. If revelation as event is not paradoxical, there is likewise no revelation, and subsequently also no theology, but only a science of the world or cosmological speculation.

Thus in fact, faith is also perception. But why is this so only in a relative sphere? For example, what does it mean to say this "here"? In faith can there only be a question of the perception of revelation, and there faith is perception in a complete sphere. For as little as the content of revelation is a paradox, equally as little is it a mystery to

that which could be spoken of as a progressive or partial perception. Faith is thus perception, and theology is therefore not to be mixed up with a literary profession. (W. i. Th., p. 13). Yet this point is probably only a piece of gladiatorial art of Peterson, for who can arrive at the idea of accusing us of that error, if he has read the Elgersburger lecture? This lecture proceeds from the impossibility of the situation of the theologian as that of a profession, and how could this impossibility be spoken about the writer of literature!

This position of the theologian, and this is our opinion, has the impossible task of speaking about God, -and if not about God, what in the world about?! However Peterson does not argue with us about the object, but about the relation to Him, precisely in the "declaration." That this "speaking about something" is the only religious and spiritual possibility of man (W. i. Th., p. 14) none of us has thought or said. However, we are of the opinion that man, even as theologian, is not able to surpass the boundaries of his human potentialities to the extent that he ceases to be a ζῷον λόγον ἔχον, i. e., that he is able only in speaking to bring himself and others to the realization that what he hears and shares, i. e., thus that that "speaking about something" in

fact belongs to human existence as something human. And because this speaking as such never possesses the thing itself and can mediate this object, we are of the opinion that there can be an actual speaking about God only as God's Word itself, in the case of Christ or as our declaration, only if the Spirit gives such utterance. From some observable standpoint, the differentiation of terminology may prove (and it does not occur to us to dispute this) that Christ "speaks" (*sedet*), the prophets and preachers "declare" (*sagen*) and the Church and theology "pronounce" (*spricht*). Whoever as a human being wants himself to be understood in the world speaks in words, and whether this "speaking is speaking," "declaring" or "pronouncing" in any differentiated sense does not matter to him ultimately. The theology of Peterson is however, if it forgets this, not a theology of man but of mystagoges or, if you will, of angels or saints.

Human speech and human discourse, however, are speech and discourse "about something," i. e., from the very beginning they have the tendency, disregarding the existential (*existentiell*) situation of the speaker (and hearer), to be understood as sentences which contain their meaning intrinsically. The essay in Theologische Blätter (1925, no. 6) at-

tacked by Peterson, tries to show that such a "speaking about" does not have meaning when it is a question about God. Moreover, it tried to show under what condition such a "speaking about God," which we were not able to ignore, could be a "speaking of God." The simple answer is when it pleases God. And that this answer has meaning only as an answer of faith, which in obedience perceives the promise of the divine word, was also said there.⁶

That the possibility to speak "of God" is only a dialectical possibility would be a statement of disbelief. (W. i. Th., p. 17). That however, the realization of this possibility does not lie at our disposal is probably enough to ward off the accusation that one confuses himself with Christ. If this potentiality is apprehended in faith, no confusion is able to take place, for Christ is not a believer! That is to say, where

⁶To be sure, one thing was missed, namely, to call attention to the fact that the spoken word has its true meaning only as it is spoken to the hearer. In other words, that the actual being of man is a mutual existence, that it is essential for the word that it is heard, as the preached word about faith in the New Testament is also called in a characteristical manner ἀκοὴ πίστεως. The character of theology however, in contrast to preaching is that it does not speak to concrete hearers. It may be concluded on the one hand that theology can only have its meaning as ecclesiastical theology (i. e., that it takes place in and for the congregation), on the other hand however, that as a human undertaking, it can in fact only be a "speaking about."

the speaking of God becomes reality, where it is a spiritually given discourse, it is there the speaking of Christ, --yet however nothing other than our own!

If God is the object of our human speaking, then we shall have to make clear to ourselves that we have to speak about ourselves, precisely in order not to put forth philosophical dialectics and in order not to speculate. That that does not mean "about our experiences" has probably been said clearly enough. That, however, we are then talking about our reality in which we singularly are able to have being in God should be equally clear. For "God is not merely God." He could be also something else. The God who reveals Himself is God, (Barth, Ges. Vortr., p. 169), "Who reveals Himself," i. e., who speaks into our reality. Or as Herrmann expresses it: "Whatever the Almighty Being is in itself, remains hidden from us. However in that which He works in us, He has appeared. We are able only to say about God what He does in us." (Die Wirklichkeit Gottes, p. 41f.). Or as it reads by Luther: "And we see here also that to believe in Christ does not mean believe that Christ is a person who is God and man; for that does not help anyone; on the contrary, that this same person is Christ, that is, that he for oursake proceeded from

God and came into the world, and again leaves the world and goes to the Father.⁷ Or finally as Melanchthon said: Christum cognoscere id est beneficia eius cognoscere. That one does not make himself into Christ (W. i. Th., p. 14f.) is quite clear. For does not the statement that I am a sinner and that God is gracious to the sinner speak about God as well as it speaks about me? If it did not speak about me, it would be meaningless speculation, precisely what Kierkegaard also knew. (cf. above, p. 110). That it freely says something real does not help me.

And precisely out of that, i.e., out of the human situation, we do not remove the theologians, because we are not permitted to exposit a theologia gloriae. We are not of the opinion that the theologian, if he speaks in the Church or the Church in him, has direct authority and that the Spirit who alone is able to give his discourse life is at his disposal. For every qualification of a speaker (or also of one who praises), which says more than what lies within the realm of the humanly possible, does not stand at our disposal to distribute to the speaker. Therefore, it could concern us in the

⁷E.A. XII², p. 163.

least to name an ancestral tree in which prophets and apostles stand next to men of the Reformation and authors; (Was ist Th., p. 27) it would not bother us when we consider what method is best suited for our theology as a human attempt to speak about God. And therefore, we are also not satisfied that "one" (whoever?) is able to say: the subject of theology is not the professor of theology, but primarily Christ and secondarily the Church. (W. i. Th., p. 30). For that does not help us at all if we want to do theology, since we are able to do this only as theology professors. Of course that does not mean that in our opinion the language of the dogmatist is a direct discourse of what he believes. (ZZ, p. 296). Indeed, his faith does not stand at his disposal! And we can in fact say with Peterson, that the dogmatist sets forth what the Church believes (cf. above), only that the Church is not a so simple power for us as for Peterson.⁸

⁸ Moreover, why does Peterson say (ZZ, p. 297) that in dogmatics it is a question of the understanding of "doctrine" of a Church? Why "a"? If it is not a matter of the doctrine of the Church, dogmatics is indeed an abstract possibility which can take place as often as it pleases. If it is a question of an understanding of God (as Peterson rightly says), then there can be only one dogmatic, namely, that of the Christian Church. If doctrines of faith of different theologians are of little service, even less so are the different corresponding dogmatics

Insofar as theology speaks with authority (and again we concur with Peterson in that fact), it is not a human undertaking. It speaks with authority (it "speaks" then) whenever God's Word is active in it, when the Spirit works in it. However if that is the case, then its authority is not a deduced authority (W. i. Th., p. 16), i. e., to be presented under the image of a continual emanation, but it is an authority transmitted through God's act of power of the moment. For us, whom we theologians dare to undertake to address, this authority only has the meaning that it turns theology into a mandate for us. We must do theology. Woe to us, if we did not! However, we cannot turn it into a direct authority. It is only indirect. Neither we theologians have it so easy that we can presume to claim authority for our declarations, nor the laity that they are able to refer to our declarations as authority. May that be the case also elsewhere! But precisely

of individual historical churches similar to the claims of a dogmatic. The claims which are placed on the dogmatics are not merely formal, but are those which grow out of it, that one is said to be speaking about a certain act of salvation of God. Moreover, Peterson speaks also about the Church. But where is the latter, if the possibility (and the fact) exists that "the Church" does not know that there is a dogma? (Was ist Theology, p. 24).

for that reason (because only "revelation itself determines in the final analysis the actual being of theology," W. i. Th., p. 19) there is no theology elsewhere, i. e., no declaring on the basis of revelation and obedience. Yet even this is again a theological statement which stands in the "dialectics" of the entire theological thinking. A glance at other theologians is able to make our own undertaking questionable for us again and again.

That mandate however, under which theology stands, is nothing other than "the concrete fulfillment of that that the Logos of God concretely spoke about God." (W. i. Th., p. 19). But theology is not for that sake the "elongation of the Logos revelation" (*ibid*) in the direct sense, but only in the indirect. It is a human undertaking which takes place under divine mandate and stands under the promise that God's Spirit intends to make our word a living word which is authority.

But why is dogma inserted between theology and revelation? (W. i. Th., p. 19ff.). We are not acquainted at all with "the" dogma, and we ask ourselves why Peterson does not say where and what this dogma is! We are acquainted only with dogmas which we definitely do not regard as "confessions," so

little does theology mean for us the extension of the act of faith. (W. i. Th., p. 21). Dogmas establish at times a position of theological effort and thus share in the ambiguous character of all theology and theological authority. We do not intend to settle it through historical observation. For as little as theology is knowledge on the basis of a human presupposition, so are its results, dogmas, contingent opinions of a school, i. e., stadiums of a process of development. Their meaning lies in the invisible, about which it speaks. They have the character of a reference, of a testimony of the revelation of God given in the Bible. Yet they do not consequently lose the character of human formulations which are related to a history of development of human theological thought, and no ecclesiastical pronouncement can free them from that. Their authority is therefore, as that of theology, an indirect authority. It exists only through the relationship to revelation. As words of men, dogmas come under the judgment of the Word of God revealed in Scripture. That does not mean, on the other hand, that we play the Bible on principle against dogma (Peterson, ZZ, p. 299), but that dogma must validate itself in Scripture.⁹

⁹All this is good Luther according to the introduction of the Formula of Concord where it is stated: credimus, confite-
mur et docemus unicam regulam et normam, secundum quam omnia
dogmata omnesque doctores aestimari et iudicari oporteat,
nullam omnino aliam esse, quam prophetica et apostolica scripta
cum veteris tum novi testamenti... Reliqua vero sive patrum
sive neotericorum scripta, quocunque veniant nomine, sacris
litteris nequaquam sunt aequiparanda, sed universa illis ita
subiicienda sunt, ut alia ratione non recipiantur, nisi testi-
um loco, qui doceant, quod etiam post apostolorum tempora,
et in quibus partibus orbis doctrina illa prophetarum et
apostolorum sincerior conservata sit... Hoc modo luculentum
discrimen inter sacras veteris et novi testamenti litteras
et omnia aliorum scripta retinetur, et sola sacra scripture
index, norma et regula agnoscitur, ad quam seu ad Lydium
lapidem omnia dogmata exigenda sunt et iudicanda, an pia an
impia, an vera, an vero falsa sint. Cetera autem Symbola et
alia scripta, quorum paulo ante mentionem fecimus, non ob-
tinent auctoritatem iudicis; haec enim dignitas solis sacris
litteris debetur: sed duntaxat pro religione nostra testimo-
nium dicunt eamque explicant ac ostendunt, quomodo singulis
temporibus sacrae litterae in articulis controversis in
ecclesia Dei a doctoribus, qui tum vixerunt intellectae et
explicatae fuerint, et quibus rationibus dogmata cum sacra
scriptura pugnantia reiecta et condemnata sint.*

*We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged... Other writings of ancient and modern teachers, whatever their names, should not be put on a par with Holy Scripture. Every single one of them should be subordinated to the Scriptures and should be received in no other way and no further than as witnesses to the fashion in which the doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved in post-apostolic times... In this way the distinction between the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments and all other writings is maintained, and Holy Scripture remains the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone all doctrines should and must be understood and judged as good or evil, right or wrong. Other symbols and other writings are not judged like Holy Scripture, but merely witnesses and expositions of the faith, setting

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One may so formulate the difference between theology and dogma that all theology tends to become dogma, that it is the continuous process of reflection and argumentation (also the same of criticism), while dogmas are the existential results of theological effort. Of course, one could say that the Church creates dogma from time to time (ZZ, p. 297f.), but that is for us a historical judgment. For to exercise direct authority through the creation of a dogma lies at the disposal of a church (for it can only be a question of an existential church) as little as of a professor. "The" dogma is an ideal power, namely, completed theology. If we possessed "the" dogma, we would not need theology anymore. Dogma cannot therefore be an object of theology, but is its terminal point, its completion. Consequently, "the" dogma, not the theologian, in fact has to determine the inner form of dogmatics, as Peterson correctly says. (ZZ, p. 300). The object of theology is alone the revelation of God, through which theology is fundamentally loosened from the connection with the so-called philosophical sciences. (W. i. Th., p. 23). In a certain sense of course, dogmas are an object of theology, inasmuch as a critical rec-

forth how at various times the Holy Scriptures were understood in the church of God by contemporaries with reference to controverted articles, and how contrary teachings were rejected and condemned. (The Book of Concord, trans. T.G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg 1959, p. 464f.).

collection over its own effort is a part of it, since all its results can only claim a relative value which proves itself through the relation to the Scripture.

Thus the alternative, whether one chooses between a theological opinion of a school or dogma (W. i. Th., p. 24), we may dismiss. And if one wanted to ask instead if one chooses between theological opinions of a school or revelation, then we could decide on the second side, if in the meantime we do not forget that we never directly have revelation. The alternative must truthfully be called a theological opinion of a profession or faith in the revelation of God's Word. And we know that we are not able to decide on this alternative ourselves, but that the Spirit gives faith.

How much the entire thought process of Peterson stems from the exclusion of the Holy Spirit becomes clear by the reflection of his thesis on Schrift und Predigt. To be sure, the Holy Spirit has not been shut out in his reflections, but turned about, because he is oriented thoroughly and with severe consequences towards the institution, i. e., towards the teaching and preaching Church which controls the sacraments. Yet precisely for that reason it is shut off, according to our understanding. It becomes obvious that Peterson, for example, shows no interest in an exact definition

of inspiration. He speaks (W. i. Th., p. 29) strangely undogmatically about theories of inspiration, while for us the question of inspiration becomes actually vital precisely at this point.

For Peterson, the doctrine of inspiration is replaced by his doctrine of dogma. For in spite of every difference just established between him and ourselves a common concern again appears, namely, his teaching of dogma is truthfully the protection against a conception of Scripture which accepts this teaching as a compendium of teachings in the sense of the orthodox doctrine of inspiration or of Bible literalism, or which conceives it as a collection of writings or declarations of prophetic personalities. In other words, it is the protection against the direct identification of Scripture and revelation. Consequently, we concur with Peterson that the Bible speaks God's Word only when it is said (and as we must add: heard). As he who hears Moses and Jeremiah, Matthew and Paul hears only a testimony of revelation (Barth, ZZ 1925, p. 220), so does he who today hears the exegete and the preacher only hear a testimony; and exegeses, like sermons, are in this respect only the equivalent continuation of Old Testament prophecy, but not the continuation of the fact that the Logos

of God has spoken concretely about God, and only revelation in the last analysis can determine its essence. (W. i. Th., p. 19). Consequently, we are able completely to own up to that spoken by Peterson concerning the relation of Christ's revelation to the prophetic word (W. i. Th., p. 30, par. 20) under the one condition, that one means here with "revelation-event" what we have designated as the eternal event. We agree then: "For the word of Christ, it is essential to note that it does not intrinsically enter into the Bible, inasmuch as Christ not only has said God's Word, but is it."

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But we cannot go along with the opinion, "The danger which lies in the fact that the biblical mediation of the words of Christ makes a prophetic pronouncement out of his speeches is dismissed." (cf. above). Of course we also see this danger, but Peterson, so it seems, makes exactly that mistake by shutting out the Holy Spirit and by affirming a continuous progression of revelation in dogma. That danger does not allow itself to be disposed of through a tangible, objective authority. On the contrary, we find ourselves continually in insecurity which will not be overcome by any way other than in the believing hearing of the testimony, i. e., revelation cannot be made into a direct content of declaration through any dogma.

It can only become an event in the faithful hearing of the testimony.

Nevertheless, we agree again with Peterson that dogma means in a certain sense salvation, means in the real sense, insofar as it is a reference, a testimony, not for the Bible, but for the revelation declared in Scripture. Thus it is not an essential life assertion of the Church, because the latter secures itself through dogma against understanding Scripture in a direct sense as revelation, be it in the sense of the orthodox dogma of inspiration, of biblical literalism or of the contemporary view of "God in history." And it announces through dogma that it is seriously attempting to understand Scripture as testimony, by speaking in its dogma of the one declared and thus denying the testimony. Consequently, theology is always exegesis, inasmuch as it possesses an opening to revelation only through the testimony of Scripture and seeks to grasp, in the exegesis, what Scripture, understood as testimony, says. According to its form then, theology is always the exegesis of Scripture. According to its content, it is discourse about revelation. Since the latter, however, is the eternal event as judgment or forgiveness, under which the real man stands, the object of theology is nothing other

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than the perceivable presentation of man's existence as
determined through God, i. e., as he must see it in light
of Scripture.

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